

A color photograph of the Dalai Lama, smiling and wearing glasses and a maroon robe, standing in front of a background of green trees. The image is the cover of a book.

NATIONAL
BESTSELLER

FREEDOM
IN EXILE
— THE —
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
— OF THE —
DALAI LAMA



FREEDOM IN EXILE

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet drew the attention of the free world to the desperate plight of his people. In this revealing autobiography, the Dalai Lama describes the appalling sequence of events following the Chinese invasion of his country in 1950. He relates the story of his unusual life: how in 1938, aged only two, he was recognised through a traditional process of 'discovery' to be the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama; taken away from his parents he was then brought up in Lhasa according to a monastic regimen of rigorous austerity and in almost total isolation.

At fifteen, with his country under threat from the newly Communist China, he was invested with full powers as head of state of Tibet, a country the size of Western Europe. There followed a traumatic decade during which he became the confidant of both Chairman Mao and Jawaharlal Nehru as he tried to maintain autonomy for his people. Then, in 1959, he was finally forced into exile. He escaped by means of a daring plan and was later followed by over 100,000 destitute refugees. Since that time, in exile in the Himalayan village of Dharamsala, he has devoted himself to rebuilding the shattered lives of his fellow refugees and to promoting world peace through an unwavering policy of non-violence.

All this he now describes in his own words, telling what it was like to grow up revered as a deity among his people; sharing his inner feelings about what it means to be the Dalai Lama; telling of secret deals struck with the CIA, as Tibet continued its struggle for independence; talking freely of the many world leaders he has known.

CHAPTER IV.

The history of the United States from 1789 to 1861 is a history of the struggle for the establishment of a free government. The struggle was not only between the North and the South, but also between the different sections of the North. The struggle was not only between the North and the South, but also between the different sections of the North. The struggle was not only between the North and the South, but also between the different sections of the North.

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All the while the struggle was going on, the country was divided into two parts. The North was divided into two parts. The North was divided into two parts. The North was divided into two parts.

Freedom in Exile



The autobiography
of His Holiness
The Dalai Lama
of Tibet



Rupa & Co.

CALCUTTA
ALLAHABAD BOMBAY DELHI

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(Maps drawn by Hanni Bailey)

Foreword

Dalai Lama means different things to different people. To some it means that I am a living Buddha, the earthly manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion. To others it means that I am a 'god-king'. During the late 1950s it meant that I was a Vice-President of the Steering Committee of the People's Republic of China. Then when I escaped into exile, I was called a counter-revolutionary and a parasite. But none of these are my ideas. To me 'Dalai Lama' is a title that signifies the office I hold. I myself am just a human being, and incidentally a Tibetan, who chooses to be a Buddhist monk.

It is as a simple monk that I offer this story of my life, though it is by no means a book about Buddhism. I have two main reasons for doing so. Firstly, an increasing number of people have shown an interest in learning something about the Dalai Lama. Secondly, there are a number of historical events about which I wish to set the record straight.

Because of constraints on my time, I have decided to tell my story directly in English. It has not been easy, for my ability to express myself in this language is limited. Furthermore, I am aware that some of the subtler implications of what I say may not be precisely what I intended. But the same would be true in a translation from Tibetan. I should also add that I do not have at my disposal the resources for research that some people have and my memory is as fallible as anyone else's. That said, I wish to offer my thanks to the concerned officers of the Tibetan Government in Exile and to Mr Alexander Norman, my editor, for their assistance in these areas.

May 1990

TIBET AND HER NEIGHBOURS





Holder of the White Lotus



I FLED TIBET on 31 March 1959. Since then I have lived in exile in India. During the period 1949–50, the People's Republic of China sent an army to invade my country. For almost a decade I remained as political as well as spiritual leader of my people and tried to re-establish peaceful relations between our two nations. But the task proved impossible. I came to the unhappy conclusion that I could serve my people better from outside.

When I look back to the time when Tibet was still a free country, I realise that those were the best years of my life. Today I am definitely happy, but inevitably the existence I now lead is very different from the one I was brought up to. And although there is clearly no use indulging in feelings of nostalgia, still I cannot help feeling sad whenever I think of the past. It reminds me of the terrible suffering of my people. The old Tibet was not perfect. Yet at the same time, it is true to say that our way of life was something quite remarkable. Certainly there was much that was worth preserving that is now lost for ever.

I have said that the words Dalai Lama mean different things to different people, that for me they refer only to the office I hold. Actually, *Dalai* is a Mongolian word meaning 'ocean' and *Lama* is a Tibetan term corresponding to the Indian word *guru*, which denotes a teacher. Together, the words *Dalai* and *Lama* are sometimes loosely translated as 'Ocean of Wisdom'. But this is due to a misunderstanding I feel. Originally, *Dalai* was a partial translation of Sonam Gyatso, the Third Dalai Lama's name: *Gyatso* means ocean in Tibetan. A further, unfortunate misunderstanding is due to the Chinese rendering of the word *lama* as *buo-fou*, which

has the connotation of a 'living Buddha'. This is wrong. Tibetan Buddhism recognises no such thing. It only accepts that certain beings, of whom the Dalai Lama is one, can choose the manner of their rebirth. Such people are called *tulkus* (incarnations).

Of course, whilst I lived in Tibet, being Dalai Lama meant a great deal. It meant that I lived a life far removed from the toil and discomfort of the vast majority of my people. Everywhere I went, I was accompanied by a retinue of servants. I was surrounded by government ministers and advisors clad in sumptuous silk robes, men drawn from the most exalted and aristocratic families in the land. My daily companions were brilliant scholars and highly realised religious adepts. And every time I left the Potala, the magnificent, 1,000-chambered winter palace of the Dalai Lamas, I was escorted by a procession of hundreds of people.

At the head of the column came a *Ngagpa*, a man carrying a symbolic 'wheel of life'. He was followed by a party of *tatara*, horsemen dressed in colourful, traditional costumes and carrying flags. Behind them were porters carrying my songbirds in cages and my personal belongings all wrapped up in yellow silk. Next came a section of monks from Namgyal, the Dalai Lama's own monastery. Each carried a banner decorated with sacred texts. Behind them followed musicians mounted on horseback. Then followed two groups of monk officials, first a subordinate section who acted as bearers, then monks of the *Tsedrung* order who were members of the Government. Behind these came a posse of horses from the Dalai Lama's own stables, all nicely turned out, caparisoned and led by their grooms.

There followed another troop of horses which carried the seals of state. I myself came next, carried in a yellow palanquin, which was pulled by twenty men, all officers in the army and dressed in green cloaks with red hats. Unlike the most senior officials, who wore their hair up, these had a single, long pigtail running down their backs. The palanquin itself, which was yellow in colour (to denote monasticism), was supported by a further eight men wearing long coats of yellow silk. Alongside it rode the four members of the *Kashag*, the Dalai Lama's inner Cabinet, attended by the

Kusun Depon, head of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard, and the *Mak-chi*, Commander-in-Chief of Tibet's tiny army. Both of these marched carrying their swords sternly at the salute. They wore a uniform comprised of blue trousers and yellow tunic covered with gold braid. On their heads they wore a tasselled topi. Surrounding this, the main party, there was an escort of *sing gha*, the monastic police. These terrifying-looking men were all at least six feet tall and wore heavy padding, which lent them an even more impressive appearance. In their hands they carried long whips, which they did not hesitate to use.

Behind my palanquin came my two Tutors, Senior and Junior (the former being the Regent of Tibet before I attained my majority). Then came my parents and other members of my family. They were followed by a large party of lay officials, both nobles and commoners, marshalled according to rank.

Invariably almost the entire population of Lhasa, the capital, came to try to catch a glimpse of me whenever I went out. There was an awed silence and often there were tears as people lowered their heads or prostrated themselves on the ground when I passed.

It was a life very different from the one I had known as a small boy. I was born on 6 July 1935 and named Lhamo Thondup. This means, literally, 'Wish-Fulfilling Goddess'. Tibetan names of people, places and things are often picturesque in translation. For example, Tsangpo, the name of one of Tibet's most important rivers – and source of India's mighty Brahmaputra – means 'The Purifier'. The name of our village was Taktser: Roaring Tiger. It was a small and poor settlement which stood on a hill overlooking a broad valley. Its pastures had not been settled or farmed for long, only grazed by nomads. The reason for this was the unpredictability of the weather in that area. During my early childhood, my family was one of twenty or so making a precarious living from the land there.

Taktser is situated in far north-eastern Tibet, in the province of Amdo. Geographically, Tibet can be divided into four principal areas. To the north-west lies the Changtang, an area of frozen desert which runs east-west for over eight hundred miles. It is almost

TIBET



K U N L U N M

C H A N G T A N G

T I B

• *Cartok*

H I M A L A Y A S

Tsangpo (Brahmaputra)

U - T S

DREPUN • *Shigatse*

Gyantse • *Nangarts*

SIKKIM

Tingri Dzong
MT. EVEREST
29 028 FT

A. *Kathmandu* L *Gangtok*

Nathu Pass BHU

Darjeeling

I N D I A

BANGLA
DESH



devoid of vegetation and only a few hardy nomads live amidst its desolation. To the south of the Changtang lie the provinces of U and Tsang. This area is bordered to the south and south-west by the mighty Himalayas. To the east of U-Tsang lies the province of Kham, which is the most fertile and hence most populous region in the country. To the north of Kham is situated Amdo. On the eastern borders of both Kham and Amdo lies Tibet's national boundary with China. At the time of my birth, a Muslim warlord, Ma Bufeng, had recently succeeded in establishing in Amdo a regional government loyal to the Chinese Republic.

My parents were small farmers: not peasants exactly, for they were not tied to any master; but they were by no means nobility. They leased a small amount of land and worked it themselves. The main crops in Tibet are barley and buckwheat and my parents grew both of these, together with potatoes. But quite often their year's work went to ruin due to heavy hailstorms or to drought. They also kept a number of animals, which were a more reliable source of produce. I remember that we had five or six *dzomos* (a cross between a yak and a cow) for milking and a number of footloose chickens for laying. There was a mixed flock of perhaps eighty sheep and goats, and my father nearly always had one or two or even three horses, of which he was very fond. Finally, my family kept a couple of yaks.

The yak is one of Nature's gifts to mankind. It can survive at any altitude above 10,000 feet, so it is ideally suited to Tibet. Below that they tend to die. Both as a beast of burden and as a source of milk (in the case of the female, which is called a *dri*), and meat, the yak is truly a staple of high-altitude farming. The barley which my parents grew is another Tibetan staple. When roasted and ground down into a fine flour, it becomes *tsampa*. There is rarely a meal served in Tibet which does not include *tsampa* and, even in exile, I continue to have it every day. It is not eaten as flour, of course. You must first combine it with liquid, usually tea, but milk (which I prefer) or yoghurt or even *chang* (Tibetan beer) will do. Then, working it with your fingers around your bowl, you roll it into small balls. Otherwise it can be used as

a base for porridge. To a Tibetan, it is very tasty though, in my experience, few foreigners like it. The Chinese in particular do not care for it at all.

Most of what my parents grew on the farm was used solely to feed us. But my father would occasionally trade grain or a few sheep either with passing nomads or down at Siling, the nearest town and capital of Amdo, which lay three hours away by horse. Currency was not much in use in these far-flung rural areas and most trade was conducted by barter. Thus my father would exchange the season's surplus for tea, sugar, cotton cloth, a few ornaments perhaps, and maybe some iron utensils. Occasionally he would come back with a new horse, which delighted him. He had a very good feel for them and had quite a reputation locally as a healer of horses.

The house I was born in was typical of our area of Tibet. It was built of stone and mud with a flat roof along three sides of a square. Its only unusual feature was the guttering, which was made from branches of juniper wood, gouged out to make a channel for rain water. Directly in front of it, between the two 'arms' or wings, there was a small yard in the middle of which was a tall flagpole. From this hung a banner, secured top and bottom, on which were written innumerable prayers.

The animals were kept behind the house. Inside were six rooms: a kitchen, where we spent most of our time when indoors; a prayer-room with a small altar, where we would all gather to make offerings at the beginning of the day; my parents' room; a spare room for any guests we might have; a storeroom for our provisions; and finally a byre for the cattle. There was no bedroom for us children. As a baby, I slept with my mother; then, later, in the kitchen, by the stove. For furniture, we had no chairs or beds as such, but there were raised areas for sleeping in both my parents' room and the spare room. There were also a number of cupboards made of gaily painted wood. The floors were likewise wooden and neatly laid with planks.

My father was a man of medium height with a very quick temper. I remember pulling at his moustache once and being hit

hard for my trouble. Yet he was a kind man too and he never bore grudges. An interesting story was told about him at the time of my birth. He had been ill for a number of weeks and was confined to his bed. No one knew what was wrong with him and people started to fear for his life. But on the day I was born, he suddenly began to recover, for no obvious reason. It cannot have been excitement at becoming a father since my mother had already given birth to eight children, although only four had survived. (Of necessity, farming families like ours believed in large families and my mother bore sixteen children in all, of whom seven lived.) At the time of writing, Lobsang Samten, my immediate elder brother, and Tsering Dolma, my eldest sister, are no longer living, but my two other older brothers, my younger sister and my younger brother are still alive and well.

My mother was undoubtedly one of the kindest people I have ever known. She was truly wonderful and was loved, I am quite certain, by all who knew her. She was very compassionate. Once, I remember being told, there was a terrible famine in nearby China. As a result, many poor Chinese people were driven over the border in search of food. One day, a couple appeared at our door, carrying in their arms a dead child. They begged my mother for food, which she readily gave them. Then she pointed at their child and asked whether they wanted help to bury it. When they had caught her meaning, they shook their heads and made clear that they intended to eat it. My mother was horrified and at once invited them in and emptied the entire contents of the larder before regretfully sending them on their way. Even if it meant giving away the family's own food so that we ourselves went hungry, she never let any beggars go empty-handed.

Tsering Dolma, the eldest child, was eighteen years older than me. At the time of my birth she helped my mother run the house and acted as my midwife. When she delivered me, she noticed that one of my eyes was not properly open. Without hesitating, she put her thumb on the reluctant lid and forced it wide – fortunately without ill effect. Tsering Dolma was also responsible for giving me my first meal, which, by tradition, was a

liquid made from the bark of a particular bush that grew locally. This was believed to ensure a healthy child. It certainly worked in my case. In later years, my sister told me that I was a very dirty baby. No sooner had she taken me in her arms than I made a mess!

I did not have much to do with any of my three elder brothers. Thupten Jigme Norbu, the eldest, had already been recognised as the reincarnation of a high lama, Taktser Rinpoché (Rinpoché is the title given to spiritual masters and means, literally, 'Precious One'), and was installed at Kumbum, a famous monastery several hours away by horse. My next brother, Gyalo Thondup, was eight years older than me and by the time I was born he was away at school in a neighbouring village. Only my immediate elder brother, Lobsang Samten, remained behind. He was three years older than me. But then he too was sent to Kumbum to be a monk, so I hardly knew him at home.

Of course, no one had any idea that I might be anything other than an ordinary baby. It was almost unthinkable that more than one *tulku* could be born into the same family and certainly my parents had no idea that I would be proclaimed Dalai Lama. My father's recovery from illness was auspicious, but it was not taken to be of great significance. I myself likewise had no particular intimation of what lay ahead. My earliest memories are very ordinary. Some people put great emphasis on a person's first recollections, but I do not. Amongst mine I remember, for example, observing a group of children fighting and running to join in with the weaker side. I also remember the first time I saw a camel. These are quite common in parts of Mongolia and occasionally they were brought over the border. It looked huge and majestic and very frightening. I also recall discovering one day that I had worms – a common affliction in the East.

One thing that I remember enjoying particularly as a very young boy was going into the hen coop to collect the eggs with my mother and then staying behind. I liked to sit in the hens' nest and make clucking noises. Another favourite occupation of mine as an infant was to pack things in a bag as if I was about to go on

a long journey. 'I'm going to Lhasa, I'm going to Lhasa,' I would say. This, coupled with my insistence that I be allowed always to sit at the head of the table, was later said to be an indication that I must have known that I was destined for greater things. I also had a number of dreams as a small child that were open to a similar interpretation, but I cannot say categorically that I knew of my future all along. Later on, my mother told me several stories which could be taken as signs of high birth. For example, I never allowed anyone but her to handle my bowl. Nor did I ever show fear of strangers.

Before going on to tell about my discovery as Dalai Lama, I must first say something about Buddhism and its history in Tibet. The founder of Buddhism was an historical figure, Siddhartha, who came to be recognised as the Buddha Shakyamuni. He was born more than 2,500 years ago. His teachings, now known as the *Dharma*, or Buddhism, were introduced to Tibet during the fourth century AD. They took several centuries to supplant the native Bon religion and become fully established, but eventually the country was so thoroughly converted that Buddhist principles governed all society, at every level. And whilst Tibetans are by nature quite aggressive people and quite warlike, their increasing interest in religious practice was a major factor in bringing about the country's isolation. Before then, Tibet possessed a vast empire, which dominated Central Asia with territories covering large parts of northern India, Nepal and Bhutan in the south. It also included much Chinese territory. In 763 AD, Tibetan forces actually captured the Chinese capital, where they extracted promises of tribute and other concessions. However, as Tibetans' enthusiasm for Buddhism increased, Tibet's relations with her neighbours became of a spiritual rather than a political nature. This was especially true of China, where a 'priest-patron' relationship developed. The Manchu Emperors, who were Buddhists, referred to the Dalai Lama as 'King of Expounding Buddhism'.

The fundamental precept of Buddhism is Interdependence or the Law of Cause and Effect. This simply states that everything

which an individual being experiences is derived through action from motivation. Motivation is thus the root of both action and experience. From this understanding are derived the Buddhist theories of consciousness and rebirth.

The first holds that, because cause gives rise to effect which in turn becomes the cause of further effect, consciousness must be continual. It flows on and on, gathering experiences and impressions from one moment to the next. At the point of physical death, it follows that a being's consciousness contains an imprint of all these past experiences and impressions, and the actions which preceded them. This is known as *karma*, which means 'action'. It is thus consciousness, with its attendant *karma*, which then becomes 'reborn' in a new body – animal, human or divine.

So, to give a simple example, a person who has spent his or her life mistreating animals could quite easily be reborn in the next life as a dog belonging to someone who is unkind to animals. Similarly, meritorious conduct in this life will assist in a favourable rebirth in the next.

Buddhists further believe that because the basic nature of consciousness is neutral, it is possible to escape from the unending cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth that life inevitably entails, but only when all negative *karma* has been eliminated along with all worldly attachments. When this point is reached, the consciousness in question is believed to attain first liberation and then ultimately Buddhahood. However, according to Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition, a being that achieves Buddhahood, although freed from *Samsara*, the 'wheel of suffering', as the phenomenon of existence is known, will continue to return to work for the benefit of all other sentient beings until such time as each one is similarly liberated.

Now in my own case, I am held to be the reincarnation of each of the previous thirteen Dalai Lamas of Tibet (the first having been born in 1351 AD), who are in turn considered to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara, or Chenrezig, Bodhisattva of Compassion, holder of the White Lotus. Thus I am believed also to be a manifestation of Chenrezig, in fact the seventy-fourth in a

lineage that can be traced back to a Brahmin boy who lived in the time of Buddha Shakyamuni. I am often asked whether I truly believe this. The answer is not simple to give. But as a fifty-six year old, when I consider my experiences during this present life, and given my Buddhist beliefs, I have no difficulty accepting that I am spiritually connected both to the thirteen previous Dalai Lamas, to Chenrezig and to the Buddha himself.

When I was not quite three years old, a search party that had been sent out by the Government to find the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama arrived at Kumbum monastery. It had been led there by a number of signs. One of these concerned the embalmed body of my predecessor, Thupten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who had died aged fifty-seven in 1933. During its period of sitting in state, the head was discovered to have turned from facing south to north-east. Shortly after that the Regent, himself a senior lama, had a vision. Looking into the waters of the sacred lake, Lhamoi Lhatso, in southern Tibet, he clearly saw the Tibetan letters *Ab*, *Ka* and *Ma* float into view. These were followed by the image of a three-storeyed monastery with a turquoise and gold roof and a path running from it to a hill. Finally, he saw a small house with strangely shaped guttering. He was sure that the letter *Ab* referred to Amdo, the north-eastern province, so it was there that the search party was sent.

By the time they reached Kumbum, the members of the search party felt that they were on the right track. It seemed likely that if the letter *Ab* referred to Amdo, then *Ka* must indicate the monastery at Kumbum – which was indeed three-storeyed and turquoise-roofed. They now only needed to locate a hill and a house with peculiar guttering. So they began to search the neighbouring villages. When they saw the gnarled branches of juniper wood on the roof of my parents' house, they were certain that the new Dalai Lama would not be far away. Nevertheless, rather than reveal the purpose of their visit, the group asked only to stay the night. The leader of the party, Kewtsang Rinpoché, then pretended to be a servant and spent much of the evening

observing and playing with the youngest child in the house.

The child recognised him and called out 'Sera lama, Sera lama'. Sera was Kewtsang Rinpoché's monastery. Next day they left – only to return a few days later as a formal deputation. This time they brought with them a number of things that had belonged to my predecessor, together with several similar items that did not. In every case, the infant correctly identified those belonging to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama saying, 'It's mine. It's mine.' This more or less convinced the search party that they had found the new incarnation. However, there was another candidate to be seen before a final decision could be reached. But it was not long before the boy from Taktser was acknowledged to be the new Dalai Lama. I was that child.

Needless to say, I do not remember very much of these events. I was too small. My only real recollection is of a man with piercing eyes. These turned out to belong to a man named Kenrap Tenzin, who became my Master of the Robes and later taught me to write.

As soon as the search party had concluded that the child from Taktser was the true incarnation of the Dalai Lama, word was sent back to Lhasa informing the Regent. It would be several weeks before official confirmation was received. Until then, I was to remain at home. In the meantime, Ma Bufeng, the local Governor, began to make trouble. But eventually I was taken by my parents to Kumbum monastery, where I was installed in a ceremony that took place at dawn. I remember this fact particularly as I was surprised to be woken and dressed before the sun had risen. I also remember being seated on a throne.

There now began a somewhat unhappy period of my life. My parents did not stay long and soon I was alone amongst these new and unfamiliar surroundings. It is very hard for a small child to be separated from its parents. However, there were two consolations to life at the monastery. First, my immediate elder brother Lobsang Samten was already there. Despite being only three years older than me, he took good care of me and we soon became firm friends. The second consolation was the fact that his teacher was a very kind old monk, who often held me inside his gown. On one

occasion I recall that he gave me a peach. Yet for the most part I was quite unhappy. I did not understand what it meant to be Dalai Lama. As far as I knew, I was just one small boy among many. It was not unusual for children to enter the monastery at a very young age and I was treated just the same as all the others. A more painful memory is of one of my uncles, who was a monk at Kumbum. One evening, whilst he sat reading his prayers, I upset his book of scripture. As they still are today, this book was loose-leafed and the pages went everywhere. My father's brother picked me up and slapped me hard. He was extremely angry and I was terrified. For literally years afterwards I was haunted by his very dark, pock-marked face and fierce moustache. Thereafter, whenever I caught sight of him, I became very frightened.

When it became clear that I would eventually be reunited with my parents and that together we would journey to Lhasa, I began to look to the future with more enthusiasm. As any child would be, I was thrilled at the prospect of travel. This did not come about for some eighteen months, however, because Ma Bufeng refused to let me be taken to Lhasa without payment of a large ransom. And having received it, he demanded more, although he did not get it. It was thus not until the summer of 1939 that I left for the capital.

When eventually the great day dawned, a week after my fourth birthday, I remember a tremendous feeling of optimism. The party was large. Not only did it consist of my parents and my brother Lobsang Samten, but the members of the search party and a number of pilgrims came too. There were also several government officials in attendance, together with a great number of muleteers and scouts. These men spent their lives working the caravan routes of Tibet and were indispensable to any long journey. They knew exactly where to cross each river and how much time it took to climb the mountain passes.

After a few days' travel, we left the area administered by Ma Bufeng and the Tibetan Government formally announced its acceptance of my candidature. We now entered some of the most remote and beautiful countryside in the world: gargantuan

mountains flanking immense flat plains which we struggled over like insects. Occasionally, we came upon the icy rush of meltwater streams that we splashed noisily across. And every few days we would come to a tiny settlement huddled amongst a blaze of green pasture, or clinging as if by its fingers to a hillside. Sometimes we could see in the far distance a monastery perched impossibly on top of a cliff. But mostly, it was just arid, empty space with only savage dust-laden winds and angry hailstorms as reminders of Nature's living forces.

The journey to Lhasa took three months. I remember very little detail apart from a great sense of wonder at everything I saw: the vast herds of *drong* (wild yaks) ranging across the plains, the smaller groups of *kyang* (wild asses) and occasionally a shimmer of *gowa* and *nawa*, small deer which were so light and fast they might have been ghosts. I also loved the huge flocks of hooting geese we saw from time to time.

For most of the journey I travelled with Lobsang Samten in a sort of palanquin called a *dreljam* carried by a pair of mules. We spent a great deal of time squabbling and arguing, as small children do, and often came to blows. This put our conveyance in danger of overbalancing. At that point the driver would stop the animals and summon my mother. When she looked inside, she always found the same thing: Lobsang Samten in tears and me sitting there with a look of triumph on my face. For despite his greater age, I was the more forthright. Although we were really best friends, we were incapable of behaving well together. One or other of us would make a remark which led to an argument and finally to blows and tears – but the tears were always his and not mine. Lobsang Samten was so good-natured that he could not bring himself to use his superior strength against me.

At last, our party began to draw near to Lhasa. It was by now autumn. When we were within a few days' journey, a group of senior government officials came out to meet us and escorted our party on to the Doeguthang plain, two miles outside the gates of the capital. There, a huge tented encampment had been erected. In the centre was a blue and white structure called the *Macha*

Chenmo, the 'great Peacock'. It looked enormous to my eyes and enclosed an intricately carved wooden throne, which was only ever brought out for the purpose of welcoming the infant Dalai Lama back home.

The ceremony that followed, which conferred on me spiritual leadership of my people, lasted one whole day. But my memory of it is vague. I remember only a great sense of homecoming and endless crowds of people: I had never thought there could be so many. By all accounts, I behaved myself well for a four year old, even to one or two extremely senior monks who came to judge for themselves whether I really was the reincarnation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Then, at the end of it all, I was taken off with Lobsang Samten to the Norbulingka (meaning Jewel Park) which lay just to the west of Lhasa itself.

Normally, it was used only as the summer palace of the Dalai Lama. But the Regent had decided to wait until the end of the following year before formally enthroning me at the Potala palace, the seat of the Tibetan Government. In the meantime, there was no need for me to live there. This turned out to be a generous move as the Norbulingka was much the more pleasant of the two places. It was surrounded by gardens and consisted of several smallish buildings which were light and airy inside. By contrast the Potala, which I could see towering magnificently above the city in the distance, was dark, cold and gloomy inside.

I thus enjoyed a whole year free from any responsibility, happily playing with my brother and seeing my parents quite regularly. It was the last temporal liberty I was ever to know.

The Lion Throne



I REMEMBER very little of that first winter. But one thing has stuck firmly in my mind. At the end of the last month of the year, it was traditional for the monks of Namgyal monastery to perform *cham*, a ritual dance which symbolised driving out the negative forces of the past year. However, because I had not yet been formally enthroned, the Government felt it would be inappropriate for me to go to the Potala to see it. Lobsang Samten, on the other hand, was taken by my mother. I was exceedingly envious of him. When he came back late that evening, he teased me with very full descriptions of the leapings and swoopings of extravagantly costumed dancers.

Throughout the following year, that is 1940, I remained at the Norbulingka. I saw a good deal of my parents during the spring and summer months. When I was proclaimed Dalai Lama, they automatically acquired the status of the highest nobility and with it considerable property. They also had the use of a house in the palace grounds during that period each year. Almost every day, I used to steal over, with an attendant, to spend time with them. This was not really allowed, but the Regent, who was responsible for me, chose to ignore these excursions. I particularly enjoyed going over at mealtimes. This was because, as a young boy destined to be a monk, certain foods such as eggs and pork were forbidden to me, so it was only at my parents' house that I ever had the chance to taste them. Once, I remember being caught in the act of eating eggs by the *Gyop Kenpo*, one of my senior officials. He was very shocked, and so was I. 'Go away,' I shouted at the top of my voice!

On another occasion, I remember sitting next to my father and watching him like a little dog as he ate some pork crackling, hoping that he would give me some – which he did. It was delicious. So, altogether, my first year in Lhasa was a very happy time. I was still not yet a monk and my education lay before me. Lobsang Samten, for his part, enjoyed a year off from the schooling he had begun at Kumbum.

During the winter of 1940, I was taken to the Potala, where I was officially installed as spiritual leader of Tibet. I do not recall anything particular about the ceremony this entailed, save that it was the first time I sat on the Lion Throne, a vast, jewel-encrusted and beautifully carved wooden structure that stood in the *Si shi phuntsog* (Hall of All Good Deeds of the Spiritual and Temporal World), the principal stateroom in the east wing of the Potala.

Soon after, I was taken to the Jokhang temple, in the middle of the city, where I was inducted as a novice monk. This involved a ceremony known as *taphue*, meaning 'cutting of the hair'. From now on, I was to be shaven-headed and attired in maroon monk's robes. Again, I do not remember much about the ceremony itself except that at one point, on seeing the flamboyant costumes of some ritual dancers, I completely forgot myself and blurted out excitedly to Lobsang Samten, 'Look over there!'

My locks were symbolically shorn by Reting Rinpoché, the Regent, who, in addition to his position as head of state until I reached my majority, was also appointed as my Senior Tutor. At first I was cautious in my attitude to him, but I came to like him very much. His most striking feature, I remember, was a continually blocked nose. As a person, he was quite imaginative, with a very relaxed mental disposition, a man who took things easily. He loved picnics and horses, as a result of which he became good friends with my father. Sadly though, during his years as Regent, he had become something of a controversial figure and the Government itself was by now quite corrupt. For example, the practice of buying and selling high positions was commonplace.

At the time of my induction, there were rumours that Reting Rinpoché was not fit to perform the hair-cutting ceremony. It was

suggested that he had broken his vows of celibacy and was therefore no longer a monk. There was also open criticism of the way he had punished an official who had spoken against him in the National Assembly. Nevertheless, in accordance with ancient custom, I forfeited my name Lhamo Thondup and assumed his, Jamphel Yeshe, along with several others, so that my full name now became Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso.

In addition to Reting Rinpoché as Senior Tutor, I was appointed a Junior Tutor, Tathag Rinpoché, who was an especially spiritual man and very warm and kind. After our lessons together, he would often indulge in casual talks and jokes which I greatly appreciated. Finally, during my early years, Kewtsang Rinpoché, leader of the search party, was given unofficial responsibility as a third tutor. He stood in for the others whenever either of them was away.

I was particularly fond of Kewtsang Rinpoché. Like myself, he was from Amdo. He was so kind that I could never take him seriously. During our lessons, instead of reciting what I was supposed to, I used to hang round his neck and say, 'You recite!' Later, he warned Trijang Rinpoché, who became my Junior Tutor when I was around nineteen years old, that he should take care not to smile or I would be certain to take advantage of him.

These arrangements did not last long, however, for soon after I began my novitiate, Reting Rinpoché gave up the Regency, mainly on account of his unpopularity. Despite my being only six years old, I was asked who I thought should replace him. I nominated Tathag Rinpoché. He then became my Senior Tutor and was replaced as Junior Tutor by Ling Rinpoché.

While Tathag Rinpoché was a very gentle man, Ling Rinpoché was very reserved and stern, and to begin with I was really scared of him. I became afraid even at the sight of his servant and quickly learned to recognise the sound of his footsteps – at which my heart missed a beat. But in the end I became friendly towards him and we developed a very good relationship. He became my closest confidante right up until his death in 1983.

As well as my tutors, three men were appointed to be my personal attendants, all of them monks. They were the *Chöpon*

Khenpo, Master of the Ritual, the *Sölpon Khenpo*, Master of the Kitchen and the *Simpon Khenpo*, Master of the Robes. This last was Kenrap Tenzin, the member of the search party whose piercing eyes had made such an impression on me.

When I was very young, I developed a close attachment to the Master of the Kitchen. So strong was it that he had to be in my sight at all times, even if it was only the bottom of his robe visible through a doorway or under the curtains which served as doors inside Tibetan houses. Luckily, he tolerated my behaviour. He was a very kind and simple man, and almost completely bald. He was not a very good storyteller, nor an enthusiastic playmate, but this did not matter one bit.

I have often wondered since about our relationship. I see it now as being like the bond between a kitten or some small animal and the person who feeds it. I sometimes think that the act of bringing food is one of the basic roots of all relationships.

Immediately after my induction as a novice monk, I began to receive my primary education. This consisted solely of learning to read. Lobsang Samten and I were both taught together. I remember our schoolrooms (one at the Potala and one at the Norbulingka) very well. On opposite walls hung two whips, a yellow silk one and a leather one. The former, we were told, was reserved for the Dalai Lama and the latter was for the Dalai Lama's brother. These instruments of torture terrified us both. It took only a glance from our teacher at one or other of these whips to make me shiver with fear. Happily, the yellow one was never used, although the leather one came off the wall once or twice. Poor Lobsang Samten! Unluckily for him, he was not such a good student as I was. But then again, I have a suspicion that his beatings might have followed the old Tibetan proverb: 'Hit the goat to scare the sheep.' He was made to suffer on my behalf.

Although neither Lobsang Samten nor I were allowed to have friends of our own age, we were never short of company. Both at the Norbulingka and the Potala were an ample staff of sweepers, or room attendants (you could not call them footmen). Mostly they were middle-aged men of little or no education, some of

whom had come to the job after serving in the army. Their duty was to keep the rooms tidy and to see to it that the floors were polished. This last I was very particular about as I enjoyed skating on them. When Lobsang Samten was eventually taken away because the two of us behaved so badly together, these men were my only companions. But what companions they were! Despite their age, they played like children.

I was about eight when Lobsang Samten was sent to study at a private school. Naturally, this saddened me for he was my sole contact with my family. Now I only saw him during his school holidays at the time of the full moon. When he left after each visit, I remember standing at the window watching, my heart full of sorrow, as he disappeared into the distance.

Apart from these monthly reunions, I had only the occasional visits of my mother to look forward to. When she came, she was usually accompanied by my elder sister, Tsering Dolma. I particularly enjoyed these visits as they would invariably bring presents of food. My mother was a wonderful cook and was well known for her excellent bakery and pastry.

When I reached my early teens, my mother would also bring with her Tenzin Choegyal, my youngest brother. He is twelve years my junior and if there was ever a more unruly child than myself, then it was he. One of his favourite games was to take ponies on to the roof of our parents' house. I also well remember one occasion when, as a small boy, he sidled up to me to say that Mother had recently ordered pork from the slaughterman. This was forbidden for, whilst it was acceptable to buy meat, it was not acceptable to order it since that might lead to an animal being killed specially to fulfil your requirement.

Tibetans have a rather curious attitude towards eating non-vegetarian food. Buddhism does not necessarily prohibit the eating of meat, but it does say that animals should not be killed for food. In Tibetan society it was permissible to eat meat – indeed it was essential as, apart from *tsampa*, there was often not much else – but not to be involved in butchery in any way. This was left to others. Some of it was undertaken by Muslims, of whom there

was a thriving community, with its own mosque, settled in Lhasa. Throughout Tibet, there must have been several thousand Muslims. About half came originally from Kashmir, the remainder from China.

On one occasion, when my mother did bring me a present of some meat (sausages filled with rice and mince – a Taktser speciality), I remember eating it all at once, because I knew that if I told any of my sweepers about it I would have to share it with them. The next day, I was extremely ill. Following this incident, the Master of the Kitchen almost lost his job. Tathag Rinpoché thought he must have been at fault, so I was compelled to admit the truth of the matter. It was a good lesson.

Although it is very beautiful, the Potala was not a nice place to live. It was built on a rocky outcrop known as the 'Red Hill', on the site of a smaller building, at the end of the time of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, who ruled during the seventeenth century by the Christian calendar. When he died in 1682, it was still far from completion so Desi Sangye Gyatso, his faithful Prime Minister, concealed the fact of his death for fifteen years until it was finished, saying only that His Holiness had embarked on a long retreat.

The Potala itself was not just a palace. It contained within its walls not only government offices and numerous storerooms, but also Namgyal (which means 'The Victorious') monastery with its 175 monks and many chapels, and a school for young monks destined to become *Tsedrung* officials.

As a child, I was given the Great Fifth's own bedroom on the seventh (top) storey. It was pitifully cold and ill-lit and I doubt whether it can have been touched since his time. Everything in it was ancient and decrepit, and behind the drapes that hung across each of the four walls lay deposits of centuries-old dust. At one end of the room stood an altar. On it were set small butter lamps (bowls of rancid *dri* butter into which a wick was set and lighted) and little dishes of food and water placed in offering to the Buddhas. Every day these would be plundered by mice. I became very fond of these little creatures. They were very beautiful and

showed no fear as they helped themselves to their daily rations. At night, as I lay in bed, I would hear these companions of mine running to and fro. Sometimes they came over to my bed. This was the only substantial piece of furniture in my room, other than the altar, and consisted of a large wooden box filled with cushions and surrounded by long, red curtains. The mice would clamber over these too, their urine dripping down as I snuggled under my blankets below.

My daily routine was much the same at both the Potala and the Norbulingka, although at the latter the timings were brought forward an hour because of the longer days during summer. But this was no hardship. I have never enjoyed getting up after sunrise. Once I remember oversleeping and waking up to find Lobsang Samten already outside, playing. I was furious.

At the Potala, I used to get up at around six o'clock in the morning. After dressing, I undertook a short period of prayer and meditation, which lasted about an hour. Then, just after seven, my breakfast was brought in. This invariably consisted of tea and *tsampa*, with honey or caramel. I then had my first period of study with Kenrap Tenzin. After I had learned to read and until I reached the age of thirteen, this was always penmanship. There are two principal written scripts for the Tibetan language, *Uchen* and *U-me*. One is for manuscripts and the other for official documents and personal communications. It was only necessary for me to know how to write *U-me*, but as I learned quite quickly I taught myself *Uchen* as well.

I can't help laughing when I think back on these early morning lessons. For whilst I sat under the attentive eye of my Master of the Robes, I could hear my Master of the Ritual next door chanting his prayers. The 'schoolroom' was actually just a veranda, with rows of potted plants, situated adjacent to my bedroom. It was often quite cold there, but it was light and offered good opportunities to study the *dungkar*, small, black birds with a vivid red beak that used to build their nests high up in the Potala. Meanwhile, the Master of the Ritual sat in my bedroom. Unfortunately, he had a habit of falling asleep whilst reciting these morning prayers.

When this happened, his voice trailed off rather like a gramophone player running down when the electricity has failed as his chanting turned to a mumble and finally stopped. Then there would be a pause until he woke up, whereupon he would start up again. Only then he would get into a muddle as he wouldn't know where he had left off, so quite often he repeated himself several times over. It was very comical. But there was a good side to this. When eventually I came to learn these prayers myself, I already knew them by heart.

After penmanship came memorisation. This simply consisted of learning a Buddhist text for recital later on in the day. I found this very boring as I learned fast. I should say, though, that I often forgot just as quickly.

At ten o'clock came a respite from the morning's lessons when there was a meeting for members of the Government, which I had to attend even at a very young age. From the beginning, I was groomed for the day when, in addition to my position as spiritual leader of Tibet, I would assume temporal leadership as well. At the Potala, the assembly hall where this took place was next door to my room: the officials came up from the government offices which were on the second and third floors of the building. The meetings themselves were quite formal occasions – during which people's duties for the day were read out to them – and, of course, protocol regarding myself was strictly observed. My Lord Chamberlain, the *Donyer Chenmo*, would come to my room and lead me to the hall where I was greeted first by the Regent and then the four members of the *Kashag*, each according to rank.

After the morning meeting with the Government, I returned to my rooms for further instruction. I was now joined by my Junior Tutor, to whom I recited the passage I had learned during the period of memorisation that morning. He then read out to me the text for the next day, explaining it to me in detail as he went along. This session lasted until around noon. At this point, a bell was rung (as it was every hour – except once when the ringer forgot, so he rang it thirteen times!). Also at noon, a conch was blown.

Then followed the most important part of the young Dalai Lama's day: play.

I was very fortunate in that I had quite a good collection of toys. When I was very young, there was an official at Dromo, a village on the border with India, who used to send up imported toys to me, along with boxes of apples when they were available. Also, I used to be given gifts by the various foreign officials who came to Lhasa. One of my favourites was a Meccano set given to me by the head of the British Trade Mission, which had an office in the capital. As I grew older, I acquired several more sets of Meccano until by the time I was about fifteen I had them all, ranging from the easiest to the most difficult.

When I was seven years old, a deputation of two American officials came to Lhasa. They brought with them, in addition to a letter from President Roosevelt, a pair of beautiful singing birds and a magnificent gold watch. These were both welcome presents. I was not so impressed with the gifts brought to me by visiting Chinese officials, however. Bolts of silk were of no interest to a small boy.

Another favourite toy was a clockwork train set. I also had a very good set of lead soldiers, which, when I was older, I learned to melt down and recast as monks. In their original form, I enjoyed using them in wargames. I used to spend ages setting them out. Then, when battle was commenced, it took only minutes to devastate the beautiful formations that I had arranged them in. The same went for another game which involved making tiny models of tanks and aeroplanes from *tsampa* dough, or *pa*, as it is properly known.

First of all, I would hold a competition amongst my grown-up friends to see who could produce the best models. Each person was given an equal amount of dough and allowed, say, half an hour to build an army. I then judged the results. There was no danger of losing this stage of the game as I am quite dextrous. Often I would disqualify the others for making such bad models. I would then sell some of my models to my opponents for twice as much dough as it took to make them. In this way I contrived

to end up with much the strongest forces and at the same time I was able to derive satisfaction from bartering. Then we joined battle. Up until now, I had had everything my own way, so this was when I generally lost. For my sweepers never gave quarter in any sort of competition. I often tried to use my position as Dalai Lama to my advantage, but it was no use. I played very forcefully. Quite often I lost my temper and used my fists, but they still did not give in. Sometimes they even made me cry.

Another favourite pursuit of mine was military drill, which I learned from Norbu Thondup, my favourite sweeper and one of those who had been in the army. I was always so full of energy as a boy that I enjoyed anything that involved physical activity. I loved one particular jumping game – which was officially banned – which involved running as fast as you could up a board set at an angle of about 45° and leaping off at the top. However, my tendency to aggression did once almost get me into serious trouble. I had found an old, ivory-topped swagger-stick amongst my predecessor's belongings. This I took for my own. One day, I was swinging it violently around my head when it slipped from my hand and went spinning hard into Lobsang Samten's face. He dropped to the floor with a crash. For a second, I was convinced that I had killed him. After a few stunned moments, he stood up, in floods of tears and with blood pouring from a terrible deep gash on his right eyebrow. This subsequently became infected and took a very long time to heal. Poor Lobsang Samten ended up with a prominent mark that scarred him for the rest of his life.

Shortly after one o'clock came a light lunch. Now it so happened that, because of the Potala's position, sunlight flooded the room at midday when my morning's studies ended. But by two o'clock it had begun to fade and the room fell back into shadow. I hated this moment: as the room sank back into shade, a shadow fell across my heart. My afternoon studies began soon after lunch. The first hour and a half consisted of a period of general education with my Junior Tutor. It was all he could do to hold my attention. I was a very reluctant pupil and disliked all subjects equally.

The curriculum that I studied was the same as that for all monks pursuing a doctorate in Buddhist studies. It was very unbalanced and in many ways totally inappropriate for the leader of a country during the late twentieth century. Altogether, my curriculum embraced five major and five minor subjects, the former being: logic; Tibetan art and culture; Sanskrit; medicine; and Buddhist philosophy. This last is the most important (and most difficult) and is subdivided into a further five categories: *Prajnaparamita*, the perfection of wisdom; *Madhyamika*, the philosophy of the Middle Way; *Vinaya*, the canon of monastic discipline; *Abidharma*, metaphysics; and *Pramana*, logic and epistemology.

The five minor subjects are poetry; music and drama; astrology; metre and phrasing; and synonyms. Actually, the doctorate itself is awarded on the basis only of Buddhist philosophy, logic and dialectics. For this reason, it was not until the mid-1970s that I studied Sanskrit grammar; and certain subjects, such as medicine, I have never studied other than in an informal way.

Fundamental to the Tibetan system of monastic education is dialectics, or the art of debating. Two disputants take turns in asking questions, which they pose to the accompaniment of stylised gestures. As the question is put, the interrogator brings his right hand up over his head and slaps it down on to his extended left hand and stamps his left foot on the ground. He then slides his right hand away from the left, close to the head of his opponent. The person who is being asked questions remains passive and concentrates on trying not only to answer, but also to turn the tables on his opponent, who is all the time pacing around him. Wit is an important part of these debates and high merit is earned by turning your opponent's postulates to your own humorous advantage. This makes dialectics a popular form of entertainment even amongst uneducated Tibetans who, though they might not follow the intellectual acrobatics involved, can still appreciate the fun and the spectacle. In the old days, it was not unusual to see nomads and other country people from far outside Lhasa spend part of their day watching learned debates in the courtyard of a monastery.

A monk's ability at this unique form of disputation is the criterion by which his intellectual achievements are judged. For this reason, as Dalai Lama, I had to have not only a good grounding in Buddhist philosophy and logic but also proficiency at debating. I therefore began to study subjects in earnest when I was ten years old and at twelve I was appointed two *tsenshap*, experts who coached me in the art of dialectics.

After the first of the afternoon periods of study, my tutor spent the next hour explaining how to debate the topic of the day. Then at four, tea was served. If there is anyone who drinks more tea than the British, it is the Tibetans. According to one Chinese statistic I came across recently, Tibet imported ten million tons of tea annually from China before the invasion. This cannot possibly be true as it implies that every Tibetan drank almost two tons per year. The figure was obviously invented to try to prove Tibet's economic dependence on China, but it does give an indication of our fondness for tea.

Having said that, I do not entirely share my countrymen's liking for it. In Tibetan society, tea is traditionally drunk salted and with *dri* butter in place of milk. This makes a very good and nourishing drink providing it is carefully prepared, but the taste depends very much on the quality of the butter. The Potala kitchens were regularly supplied with fresh, creamy butter and the brew they produced was excellent. But that was the only time I ever really enjoyed Tibetan tea. Today I generally drink it English style, in the mornings and evenings. During the afternoons, I drink plain hot water, a habit I picked up in China during the 1950s. Though this might sound insipid, it is in fact extremely healthy. Hot water is considered to be the first remedy in the Tibetan medical system.

After tea, the two *tsenshap* monks arrived and I spent the next hour and a bit debating abstract questions like, for example, what is the nature of Mind? At last the day's tribulations would come to an end at approximately half-past five. I cannot give accurate times as Tibetans do not have the same high regard for clocks as do some people and things tended to start and finish when convenient. Hurry was always avoided.

As soon as my tutor had gone, I would rush out on to the roof, if I was at the Potala, with my telescope. It held a magnificent view over Lhasa from the Chakpori Medical School nearby to the Holy City, that part of the capital which lay round the Jokhang temple, in the distance. However, I was much more interested in the village of Shöl, which lay far below at the foot of the Red Hill. For it was here that the state prison stood and this was the time when the prisoners were allowed to walk in the compound. I considered them to be my friends and kept a close eye on their movements. They knew this and whenever they caught sight of me threw themselves down in prostration. I recognised them all and always knew when someone was released or there was a new arrival. I also used to check the piles of firewood and fodder that lay in the courtyard.

After this inspection, there was time for more play inside – for example, drawing – before my evening meal, which was brought to me soon after seven. This consisted of tea (inevitably), broth, sometimes with a little meat, and yoghurt or *sho*, together with a generous supply of different varieties of bread baked by my mother and sent up to me fresh every week. My favourite was that made in the Amdo style – small round loaves with a hard crust and light and fluffy inside.

Quite often I managed to eat this meal with one or more of my sweepers. They were voracious eaters, all of them. Their bowls were big enough to hold a whole kettle's worth of tea. Other times, I ate with some monks from Namgyal monastery. Generally, however, I shared my meals with just my three monk attendants and sometimes the *Chikyab Kenpo*, my Chief of Staff. In the absence of the latter, they were always boisterous occasions, and very happy too. I especially remember evening meals in winter when we sat by the fire eating our hot broth by the light of flickering butter lamps and listening to the moan of a snow-laden wind outside.

After eating I would go down the seven flights of stairs into the courtyard, where I was supposed to recite scripture and pray as I walked. But when I was young and still carefree, I hardly ever did so. Instead, I would spend the time either thinking up stories or

anticipating the ones that would be told to me before going to bed. Very often, these were of a supernatural nature, so it would be a very scared Dalai Lama who crept into his dark, vermin-infested bedroom at nine o'clock. One of the most frightening tales concerned giant owls which were supposed to snatch small boys after dark. This was based on an ancient fresco in the Jokhang temple. It made me very particular about being inside by nightfall.

My life both at the Potala and the Norbulingka was very routine. It only varied at the time of important festivals or when I undertook a retreat. During the latter, I was accompanied by one of my Tutors, though sometimes both, or other senior lamas from Namgyal monastery. Usually, I did one each year, during winter. Generally, they lasted three weeks, during which I had only one short lesson and was not allowed to play outside, just long periods of prayer and meditation conducted under supervision. As a child, I did not always enjoy this. I spent a lot of the time looking out of one or other of my bedroom windows. The one to the north faced Sera monastery, with mountains in the background. The one to the south faced into the great hall where the morning meetings with the Government were held.

This hall was hung with a collection of priceless, old *thangkas*, embroidered silk hangings depicting the life of Milarepa, one of Tibet's best-loved spiritual masters. I often used to gaze at these beautiful pictures. I wonder what happened to them.

The evenings during my retreats were even worse than the days, as it was at this time that young boys of my own age would drive their cows back home to the village of Shöl at the base of the Potala. I well remember sitting quietly saying *mantras* during the stillness of the fading light and hearing their songs as they returned from the pastures nearby. On a few occasions, I wished that I could change place with them. But gradually I came to appreciate the value of making retreats. Today I dearly wish I had more time for them.

Basically, I got on well with all of my tutors as I was quick to learn. I have quite a good mind, as I discovered with some satisfaction when I was put with some of Tibet's 'super scholars'. But mostly I just worked hard enough to keep out of trouble.

However, there came a time when my tutors became worried about my rate of progress. So Kenrap Tenzin organised a mock exam in which I was to compete with Norbu Thondup, my favourite sweeper. Unknown to me, Kenrap Tenzin had briefed him fully beforehand, with the result that I lost the contest. I was devastated, especially as my humiliation was public.

The trick succeeded and for a time I worked very hard out of sheer anger. But in the end my good intentions wore off and I slipped back into my old ways. It was not until I was given my majority that I realised how important my education was and thereafter began to take a proper interest in my studies. Today I regret my early idleness and always study for at least four hours a day. One thing that I think might have made a difference to my early schooling is some real competition. Because I had no class-mates, I never had anyone to measure myself against.

When I was about nine years old, I discovered amongst my predecessor's belongings two old, hand-cranked movie projectors and several rolls of film. At first, nobody could be found who knew how to operate them. Eventually, an old Chinese monk, who as a boy had been presented by his parents to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama when he visited China in 1908 and who now lived permanently at the Norbulingka, was discovered to be a good technician. He was a very kind man and very sincere, with a strict devotion to his religious calling, although, like many Chinese, he had a very bad temper.

One of the films was a newsreel of King George v's coronation, which impressed me very much with its rows and rows of splendidly uniformed soldiers from all over the world. Another contained intriguing trick photography which showed female dancers being somehow hatched out of eggs. But most interesting of all was a documentary about gold mining. From it, I learned what a dangerous occupation mining is, and under what difficult conditions miners work. Later, whenever I heard about the exploitation of the working class (which I often did during the years to come), I thought of this film.

Unfortunately, the old Chinese monk, with whom I had quickly

become very good friends, died not very long after this important discovery. Luckily, I had by this time worked out how to use the projectors for myself, and in so doing gained my first experience of electricity and the workings of dynamos. This turned out to be very useful when I received a gift, apparently from the British Royal Family, of a modern electrical projector with its own generator. It was delivered via the British Trade Mission, and Reginald Fox, the assistant Trade Commissioner, came to show me how to use it.

Because of its altitude, many diseases common to other parts of the world are unknown in Tibet. However, there was one which was an ever-present danger: smallpox. When I was about ten years old, I was appointed a new, rather plump, doctor who, using imported medicine, vaccinated me against the disease. This was a very painful experience which, in addition to leaving me with four prominent scars on my arm, caused considerable pain and brought on a fever which lasted for about two weeks. I remember complaining a great deal about 'that fat doctor'.

My other personal physician at the time was nicknamed Doctor Lenin on account of his goatee beard. He was a small man with a huge appetite and an excellent sense of humour. I particularly valued him for his skill at storytelling. Both of these men were trained according to the traditional Tibetan system of medicine, about which I shall speak more in a later chapter.

Also when I was ten, the world war which had been raging for the past five years ended. I knew very little about it save that when it was over my Government sent a mission bearing gifts and a message of congratulations to the British Government in India. The officials were received by Lord Wavell, the Viceroy. The following year, a delegation was again sent to India to represent Tibet at a conference on Asian Relations.

Shortly afterwards, during the early spring of 1947, a very sad incident occurred which epitomises the way in which the selfish pursuit of personal interest amongst those in high office can have repercussions affecting the fate of a country.

One day, whilst I was watching a debate, I heard the sounds of

shots being fired. The noise came from the north, in the direction of Sera monastery. I rushed outside, full of excitement at the prospect of doing some real work with my telescope. Yet, at the same time I was also very troubled as I realised that gunfire also meant killing. It turned out that Reting Rinpoché, who had announced his political retirement six years previously, had decided to claim the Regency back. He was supported in this by certain monks and lay officials who organised a plot against Tathag Rinpoché. This resulted in Reting Rinpoché's arrest and the death of a considerable number of his followers.

Reting Rinpoché was subsequently brought to the Potala, where he made a request that he be allowed to see me. Unfortunately, this was refused on my behalf and he died in prison not long afterwards. Naturally, as a minor, I had very little opportunity to become involved in judicial matters, but looking back, I sometimes wonder whether in this case I might not have been able to do something. Had I intervened in some way, it is possible that the destruction of Reting monastery, one of the oldest and most beautiful in Tibet, might have been prevented. All in all the whole affair was very silly. Yet, despite his mistakes, I still retain a deep personal respect for Reting Rinpoché as my first tutor and *guru*. After his death, his names were dropped from mine – until I restored them many years later on the instructions of the oracle.

Not long after these unhappy events, I went with Tathag Rinpoché to Drepung and Sera monasteries (which lie respectively about five miles west and three and a half miles north of Lhasa). Drepung was at that time the largest monastery in the world, with over seven thousand monks. Sera was not much smaller, with five thousand. This visit marked my public debut as a dialectician. I was to debate with the abbots of each of Drepung's three colleges and of Sera's two colleges. Because of the recent disturbances, extra security precautions were taken, which made me feel uncomfortable. In addition, I was very nervous to be going to these great seats of learning for the first time during this lifetime. Yet somehow, they were both very familiar to me and I became convinced of some connection from my previous lives. The de-

bates, which were conducted before audiences of hundreds of monks, went off well enough, despite my nervousness.

Also, at around this time, I received from Tathag Rinpoché the special teaching of the Fifth Dalai Lama, which is considered to be particular to the Dalai Lama himself. It was received by the Great Fifth (as he is still known to all Tibetans) in a vision. In the following weeks, I had a number of unusual experiences, particularly in the form of dreams which, although they did not seem significant then, I now see as being very important.

One of the compensations of living in the Potala was that it contained numerous storerooms. These were far more interesting to a small boy than those rooms which contained silver or gold or priceless religious artefacts; more interesting even than the vast, jewel-encrusted tombs of each of my predecessors down in the vaults. I much preferred the armoury with its collection of old swords, flintlock guns and suits of armour. But even this was as nothing compared with the unimaginable treasures in the rooms containing some of my predecessor's belongings. Amongst these I found an old air rifle, complete with targets and ammunition, and the telescope, to which I have already referred, not to mention piles of illustrated books in English about the First World War. These fascinated me and provided the blueprints for the model ships, tanks and aeroplanes that I made. When I was older, I had parts of them translated into Tibetan.

I also found two pairs of European shoes. Even though my feet were far too small, I took them to wear, stuffing bits of cloth into the toes so that they fitted more or less. I was thrilled at the sound they made with their heavy, steel-capped heels.

One of the things I most enjoyed as a child was to take objects apart and then try to reassemble them. I became quite good at it. However, in the beginning, I was not always successful in my efforts. One of the items that I came across amongst my predecessor's belongings was an old musical box that had been given to him by the Tsar of Russia, with whom he had been on friendly terms. It was not working, so I decided to try to mend it. I found

that the mainspring was overwound and jammed. As I poked at it with my screwdriver, the mechanism suddenly freed itself and unwound uncontrollably, flinging out all the thin shards of metal that made the music. I shall never forget the demonic symphony of noise as the bits went flying round the room. As I think back on this incident, I realise that I was lucky not to lose an eye. My face was right up close as I fiddled with the mechanism. I might have been mistaken in later life for Moshe Dayan!

I was very grateful to Thupten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, for having been given so many wonderful gifts. Many of the sweepers at the Potala had served him during his lifetime, and from them I came to know something about his life. I learned that not only was he a highly accomplished spiritual master, but also a very able and far-sighted secular leader. I also came to know that he had twice been forced into exile by foreign invaders – first by the British, who sent in an army under the command of Colonel Younghusband in 1903, and secondly by the Manchus in 1910. In the first case, the British withdrew of their own accord, but in the second, the Manchu army was forcibly ejected during the winter of 1911–12.

My predecessor also took a great interest in modern technology. Amongst the things he imported to Tibet were an electrical generating plant, a mint for producing both coins and Tibet's first paper currency, and three cars. These were the sensation of Tibet. At the time, there was almost no wheeled transport in the country. Even horse-drawn wagons were virtually unknown. Of course they were known about, but the unyielding nature of the Tibetan land mass meant that pack animals were the only practical form of conveyance.

Thupten Gyatso was also visionary in other ways. After his second period of exile, he arranged for four young Tibetans to be sent to Britain for education. The experiment was successful, the boys did well – and were even received by the Royal Family, but sadly there was no follow-up. Had the practice of sending children abroad for education been implemented on a regular basis, as he intended, I am quite certain that Tibet's situation today would be

very different. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's reform of the army, which he recognised to be a vital deterrent, was likewise successful but unsustained after his death.

Another plan of his was to strengthen the Lhasa Government's authority in Kham. He realised that due to its distance from Lhasa, Kham in particular had been neglected by the central administration. He therefore proposed that the sons of local chieftains be brought to Lhasa for education and then sent back with government posts. He also wanted to encourage local recruitment for the army. But unfortunately, due to inertia, neither scheme materialised.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's political insight was also extraordinary. In his last written testament he warned that, unless there were radical changes,

'It may happen that here in Tibet, religion and government will be attacked both from without and within. Unless we guard our own country, it will now happen that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, the Father and the Son, and all the revered holders of the Faith, will disappear and become nameless. Monks and their monasteries will be destroyed. The rule of law will be weakened. The lands and property of government officials will be seized. They themselves will be forced to serve their enemies or wander the country like beggars. All beings will be sunk in great hardship and overwhelming fear; the days and nights will drag on slowly in suffering.'

The Panchen Lamas referred to in the text represent, after the Dalai Lamas, the highest spiritual authority in Tibetan Buddhism. By tradition, their seat is Tashilhunpo monastery in Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet.

Personally, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was a very simple man. He did away with many old customs. For example, it used to be the case that whenever the Dalai Lama left his chambers, any servant who happened to be in the vicinity would immediately leave. He said that this procedure gave unnecessary trouble to

people and made him reluctant to appear. So he abolished the rule.

As a child, I heard a number of stories about my predecessor that illustrate how down-to-earth he was. One of them, told to me by a very old man whose son was a monk at Namgyal monastery, concerned a time when a new building was being put up in the grounds of the Norbulingka. As usual, many members of the public came to lay a stone in the foundations to mark their respect and well-wishing. One day a nomad from faraway (the father of the person who told me this story) came to make a contribution. He had with him a very cantankerous mule, which, as soon as he turned his back to make the offering, sped off in search of freedom. Luckily, someone was walking in the opposite direction. The nomad called out to this person, asking him to grab the wandering mule. This the stranger did and brought it over. The nomad was at first delighted and then amazed, for his rescuer turned out to be none other than the Dalai Lama himself.

But the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was also very strict. He forbade the smoking of tobacco both at the Potala and in the grounds of the Norbulingka. However, there was one occasion when he was out walking and came to a place where some stonemasons were working. They did not see him and were talking amongst themselves. One of them complained loudly about the tobacco prohibition, saying that it was very good when a person is tired and hungry. He was going to chew some anyway. The Dalai Lama, on hearing this, turned away and left without making his presence known.

This does not mean that he was always lenient. If I have anything critical to say about him, it is that I feel he may have been a bit too autocratic. He was extremely severe with his high officials and came down heavily on them for the slightest mistake. He confined his generosity to simple people.

Thupten Gyatso's greatest achievements in the spiritual field concerned his dedication to raising the standard of scholarship in the monasteries (of which there were over six thousand in all Tibet). In doing so, he gave precedence to the most able monks,

even if they were junior. Also, he personally ordained many thousands of novices. Right up until the 1970s, most of the senior monks had received their ordinations as *bikshus* from him.

Up until my early twenties, when I began to remain there permanently, I moved each year to the Norbulingka during early spring, returning to the Potala around six months later with the onset of winter. The day that I quit my gloomy room in the Potala was undoubtedly one of my favourite during the whole year. It began with a ceremony that lasted for two hours (which seemed like an eternity to me). Then came the great procession, which I did not much care for. I would rather have walked and enjoyed the countryside, whose fresh outpourings of natural beauty were just beginning to show themselves in delicate shoots of green.

The diversions at the Norbulingka were endless. It consisted of a beautiful park surrounded by a high wall. Within this there were a number of buildings which were lived in by the members of staff. There was also an inner wall, known as the Yellow Wall, beyond which no one but the Dalai Lama, his immediate household and certain monks were allowed. On the other side of it lay several more buildings, including the Dalai Lama's private residence which was surrounded by a well-kept garden.

I happily whiled away hours in the park walking through the beautiful gardens and watching some of the many animals and birds that lived there. Amongst these were, at one time or another, a herd of tame musk deer; at least six *dogkhyi*, enormous Tibetan mastiffs which acted as guard dogs; a Pekinese sent from Kumbum; a few mountain goats; a monkey; a handful of camels brought from Mongolia; two leopards and a very old and rather sad tiger (these last in pens, of course); several parrots; half-a-dozen peacocks; some cranes; a pair of golden geese; and about thirty, very unhappy Canada geese whose wings had been clipped so that they could not fly: I felt very sorry for them.

One of the parrots was very friendly with Kenrap Tenzin, my Master of the Robes. He used to feed it nuts. As it nibbled from his fingers, he used to stroke its head, at which the bird appeared

to enter a state of ecstasy. I very much wanted this kind of friendliness and several times tried to get a similar response, but to no avail. So I took a stick to punish it. Of course, thereafter it fled at the sight of me. This was a very good lesson in how to make friends: not by force but by compassion.

Ling Rinpoché had a similarly good relationship with the monkey. It was friendly only with him. He used to feed it from his pocket, so that whenever the monkey saw him coming, it would scamper over and start delving amongst the folds of his robes.

I had slightly better luck in making friends with the fish which lived in a large, well-stocked lake. I used to stand at the edge and call them. If they responded, I rewarded them with small pieces of bread and *pa*. However, they had a tendency to disobedience and sometimes would ignore me. If this happened, I got very angry and, rather than throw them food, I would open up with an artillery barrage of rocks and stones. But when they did come over, I was very careful to see to it that the small ones got their fair share. If necessary, I would use a stick to prod the larger ones out of the way.

Once whilst I was playing at the edge of this lake, I caught sight of a lump of wood floating near the edge. I started to try to sink it with my fish-prodding stick. The next thing I knew, I was lying on the grass seeing stars. I had fallen in and started to drown. Luckily, one of my sweepers, an ex-soldier from far western Tibet, had been keeping an eye on me and came to the rescue.

Another attraction of the Norbulingka was its proximity to a tributary of the Kyichu river, which lay a few minutes' walk beyond the outer wall. As a small boy I used to go out incognito quite often, accompanied by an attendant, and walk to the water's edge. At first, this practice was ignored, but eventually Tathag Rinpoché put a stop to it. Unfortunately, protocol regarding the Dalai Lama was very strict. I was compelled to remain hidden away like an owl. In fact, the conservatism of Tibetan society at that time was such that it was considered improper for senior government ministers even to be seen looking down on to the street.

At the Norbulingka as at the Potala, I spent a great deal of time

with the sweepers. Even at a very young age, I had a dislike of protocol and formality and much preferred the company of servants to that of, say, members of the Government. I particularly enjoyed being with my parents' servants, with whom I spent a lot of time whenever I went over to my family's house. Most of them came from Amdo and I liked very much to hear stories about my own village and others nearby.

I also enjoyed their company when we went and raided my parents' food stores. They were also glad of mine on these occasions, for obvious reasons: it was an exercise in mutual benefit. The best time for these forays was in late autumn when there would always be fresh supplies of delicious dried meat, which we dipped in chilli sauce. I liked this so much that, on one occasion, I ate far too much and soon afterwards I was violently sick. As I bent over, retching in agony, Kenrap Tenzin caught sight of me and gave some words of encouragement, something like, 'That's it. Get it all up. It's good for you.' I felt very foolish and did not thank him for his attention.

Although I was Dalai Lama, my parents' servants treated me just as they would any other small boy, as in fact did everyone except on formal occasions. I received no special treatment and no one was afraid to speak their mind to me. Accordingly, I learned at an early age that life was not always easy for my people. My sweepers likewise told me freely about themselves and the injustices they suffered at the hands of officials and high lamas. They also kept me in touch with all the gossip of the day. This often took the form of songs and ballads which people sang as they worked. So, although my childhood was quite lonely at times, and although at the age of about twelve Tathag Rinpoché forbade me from going any more to my parents' house, my early life was not in the least like Prince Siddhartha's or that of Pu Yi, the last Emperor of China. Besides, as I grew up I came into contact with a number of interesting people.

There were about ten Europeans living in Lhasa throughout my childhood. I did not see much of them and it was not until Lobsang Samten brought Heinrich Harrer to me that I had the

chance to get to know an *inji*, as Westerners are known in Tibetan.

Amongst those settled in the capital when I was growing up were Sir Basil Gould, head of the British Trade Mission, and his successor, Hugh Richardson, who has since written some books about Tibet and with whom I have had several useful discussions since coming into exile. And, in addition to Reginald Fox, there was also a British medical officer, whose name I cannot recall. However, I shall never forget one occasion when this man was summoned to the Norbulingka to treat one of the peacocks which had a cyst under its eye. I watched him very carefully and listened in amazement as he spoke to it in reassuring tones using both Lhasa dialect and honorific Tibetan (which are virtually two distinct languages). It struck me as something very extraordinary when this strange man addressed the bird as 'Honourable peacock'!

Heinrich Harrer turned out to be a delightful person with blond hair such as I had never seen before. I nicknamed him *Gopse*, meaning 'yellow head'. As an Austrian, he had been interned during the Second World War, a prisoner of the British in India. But somehow he had managed to escape with a fellow prisoner named Peter Aufschnaiter. Together they had made their way to Lhasa. This was a great achievement, as Tibet was officially out of bounds to all foreigners, except the few who had special dispensation. It took them about five years living as nomads before they finally reached the capital. When they arrived, people were so impressed by their bravery and persistence that the Government permitted them to stay. Naturally, I was one of the first to hear of their arrival and I became quite curious to see what they were like, especially Harrer, as he quickly developed a reputation as an interesting and sociable person.

He spoke excellent colloquial Tibetan and had a wonderful sense of humour, although he was also full of respect and courtesy. As I began to get to know him better, he dropped the formality and became very forthright, except when my officials were present. I greatly valued this quality. We first met in 1948, I think, and for the next year and a half before he left Tibet I saw him regularly,

usually once a week. From him I was able to learn something about the outside world and especially about Europe and the recent war. He also helped me with my English, which I had recently begun to study with one of my officials. I already knew the alphabet, which I had had translated into Tibetan phonetics, and was eager to learn more. Harrer assisted me in a number of practical ways as well.

For example, he helped me with the generator that was presented to me along with the electrical projector. It had turned out to be very old and sick. I have often wondered whether the British officials did not keep the generator intended for my use and pass on their own old one to me!

Another great enthusiasm of mine at this time was for the three cars that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had imported into Tibet. Although there were no proper roads, he had used them occasionally for transport in and around Lhasa up until the time of his death. Thereafter they were not used and fell into disrepair. They now stood in a building at the Norbulingka. One of them was an American Dodge; the two others were both Baby Austins. All were of late 1920s' vintage. There was also a Willys jeep, which was acquired by the Tibetan Trade Mission that travelled to America in 1948, but which was rarely used.

As with the movie projectors, it took some time before I could trace anyone who knew anything about cars. But I was determined that they should be put back into service. Eventually a driver, Tashi Tsering, was found, another man with a very short temper, who came originally from Kalimpong, just south of the border with India. Between us we worked on the cars and finally, by plundering one of the Austins for parts, we got the other one going. Both the Dodge and the jeep were in better condition and they ran after only minor tinkering.

Of course, once we had the cars working, I was not allowed to go anywhere near them. But this became too much for me and one day, when I knew that my driver was away, I decided to take one of them out for a drive. Both the Dodge and the jeep required keys to start and these were in the possession of my driver.

However, the Baby Austin had magneto ignition and could be started by turning a crank handle.

Very gingerly, I reversed it out of its shed and proceeded to take a turn around the garden. Unfortunately, the Norbulingka park is full of trees and it was not very long before I collided with one of them. To my horror I saw that the glass of one of the headlamps was smashed. Unless I could repair it before the following day, my joyride would be discovered by my driver and I would be in trouble.

I managed to get the car back without further damage and at once began trying to repair the broken glass. To my further dismay I found that it was not ordinary glass, but tinted. So although I managed to find a piece that I was able to fashion well enough to fit, I was then faced with the problem of getting it to match the original. This I eventually succeeded in doing by smearing it with sugar syrup. In the end I was well pleased with my handiwork. But even so, I felt extremely guilty when I next saw my driver. I felt sure that he must know, or at least that he would find out, what had happened. But he never said a word. I shall never forget Tashi Tsering. He is still alive and now living in India, and although I rarely see him, I continue to regard him as a good friend.

The Tibetan calendar is rather complicated. It is based on a lunar month. Also, rather than centuries of hundreds of years, we follow a sixty-year cycle, each one of which is assigned to one of the five elements, whose order is earth, air, fire, water and iron; and one of twelve animals: the mouse, the ox, the tiger, the hare, the dragon, the serpent, the horse, the sheep, the monkey, the bird, the dog and the pig, again in order. Each of the elements comes twice, first in its male and then in its female aspect. They thus end with the tenth year. Then the first element is joined to the eleventh and twelfth animals, the second to the thirteenth and fourteenth animals, and so on. So for example, according to the Tibetan calendar, the year 2,000 AD will be the Iron Dragon year.

Throughout the centuries preceding Tibet's invasion by China.

the seasons were marked by numerous festival days. Generally these had a religious significance, but they were celebrated by monks and laymen alike. For the latter, the time was passed in eating, drinking, singing, dancing and playing games, combined intermittently with prayer.

One of the most important of these events was the New Year celebration, or *Losar*, which comes in either February or March of the Western calendar. For me its particular significance was my annual, public meeting with Nechung, the state oracle. I shall discuss this in a later chapter, but essentially this gave me and the Government the opportunity to consult, via a medium, or *kuten*, with Dorje Drakden, the protector divinity of Tibet, about the coming year.

There was one festival that I had very mixed feelings about. This was *Monlam*, the Great Prayer Festival, which followed directly after *Losar* – the reason being that as Dalai Lama, I had, even at a very young age, to participate in its most important ceremony. The other bad thing about *Monlam* was the fact that I invariably had to endure a severe bout of flu, just as I do today whenever I go to Bodh Gaya in India, due to the dust. This was because I took up residence in rooms at the Jokhang temple, which were even more derelict than my room at the Potala.

The ceremony, or *puja*, that I feared so much took place in the afternoon, at the end of the first of two weeks devoted to *Monlam*. It followed a long discourse on the life of the Buddha Shakyamuni given by the Regent. The *puja* itself lasted for over four hours, after which I had to recite from memory a long and difficult passage of scripture. I was so nervous that I took in not a word of what came before. My Senior Tutor, the Regent, my Junior Tutor and the Masters of the Ritual, Robes and Kitchen were all equally anxious. Their main worry was that because I sat high up on a throne throughout the ceremony, no one could easily prompt me if I got stuck.

But remembering my lines was only half the problem. Because the proceedings went on for so long, I had an additional dread: I feared that my bladder might not hold out. In the end everything

went well, even the first time when I was so young. But I remember being apoplectic with fear. It dulled my senses to the point where I no longer noticed what was going on around me. I ceased to be aware even of the pigeons which flew around the inside of the building, stealing from the offering plates. I only noticed them again when I was halfway through my oration.

When it was over I was ecstatically happy. Not only was the whole dreadful business over for another twelve months, but there now followed one of the best moments in the Dalai Lama's year. After the ceremony I was allowed outside to walk round the streets so that I could see the *thorma*, the huge, gaily coloured butter sculptures traditionally offered to the Buddhas on this day. There were also puppet shows and music played by military bands and an atmosphere of tremendous happiness amongst the people.

The Jokhang temple is the holiest shrine in all Tibet. It was built during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo in the seventh century AD to house a statue brought by one of his wives, Bhrikuti Devi, daughter of the Nepalese King Anshuriarum. (Songtsen Gampo had four other wives, three of them Tibetan and one Chinese, Princess Wengchen Kongjo, daughter of the second Emperor of the Tang dynasty.) Over the centuries the temple was expanded and embellished considerably. One outstanding feature of the Jokhang is the stone monument which still stands at its entrance bearing witness to the historical power of Tibet. Its inscription, engraved in both Tibetan and Chinese, records the perpetual treaty concluded by Tibet and China in AD 821-2:

'The Great King of Tibet, the Miraculous Divine Lord, and the Great King of China, the Chinese Ruler Hwang-ti, being in the relationship of nephew and uncle, have conferred together for the alliance of their kingdoms. They have made and ratified a great agreement. Gods and men all know it and bear witness so that it may never be changed; and an account of the agreement has been engraved on this stone pillar to inform future ages and generations.

'The Miraculous Divine Lord Trisong Dretsen and the Chinese King Wen Wu Hsiao-te Hwang-ti, nephew and uncle, seeking in their far-reaching wisdom to prevent all causes of harm to the welfare of their countries now or in the future, have extended their benevolence impartially over all. With the single desire of acting for the peace and benefit of all their subjects they have agreed on the high purpose of ensuring lasting good; and they have made this great treaty in order to fulfil their decision to restore the former ancient friendship and mutual regard and the old relationship of friendly neighbourliness.

'Tibet and China shall abide by the frontiers of which they are now in occupation. All to the east is the country of Great China; and all to the west is, without question, the country of Great Tibet. Henceforth on neither side shall there be waging of war nor seizing of territory. If any person incurs suspicion he shall be arrested; his business shall be inquired into and he shall be escorted back.

'Now that the two kingdoms have been allied by this great treaty it is necessary that messengers should once again be sent by the old route to maintain communications and carry the exchange of friendly messages regarding the harmonious relations between the nephew and uncle. According to the old custom, horses shall be changed at the foot of the Chiang Chun pass, the frontier between Tibet and China. At the Suiyung barrier the Chinese shall meet Tibetan envoys and provide them with all facilities from there onwards. At Ch'ing-shui the Tibetans shall meet Chinese envoys and provide all facilities. On both sides they shall be treated with customary honour and respect in conformity with the friendly relations between nephew and uncle.

'Between the two countries no smoke nor dust shall be seen. There shall be no sudden alarms and the very word 'enemy' shall not be spoken. Even the frontier guards shall have no anxiety nor fear and shall enjoy land and bed at their ease. All shall live in peace and share the blessing of happiness

for ten thousand years. The fame of this shall extend to all places reached by the sun and the moon.

'This solemn agreement has established a great epoch when Tibetans shall be happy in the land of Tibet, and Chinese in the land of China. So that it may never be changed, the Three Precious Jewels of Religion, the Assembly of Saints, the Sun and Moon, Planets and Stars have been invoked as witnesses. An oath has been taken with solemn words and with the sacrifice of animals; and the agreement has been ratified.

'If the parties do not act in accordance with this agreement or if they violate it, which ever it be, Tibet or China, nothing that the other party may do by way of retaliation shall be considered a breach of the treaty on their part.

'The Kings and Ministers of Tibet and China have taken the prescribed oath to this effect and the agreement has been written in detail. The two Kings have affixed their seals. The Ministers specially empowered to execute the agreement have inscribed their signatures and copies have been deposited in the royal records of each party.'

My room in the Jokhang was on the second storey, that is to say on the flat roof of the temple. From here, I was able to look down not only into the main part of the building itself but also into the market-place below. The window looking south gave me a view of the principal chamber, in which I could see monks chanting throughout the day. These monks were always very well behaved and diligent in their offices.

The view from the east window was very different, however. This one enabled me to look down into a courtyard where novice monks, like myself, gathered. I used to watch amazed as they played truant and sometimes even fought each other. When I was very young, I used to creep downstairs so that I could get a better view of them. I couldn't believe what I saw and heard. For a start, they did not chant their prayers as they were supposed to. They sang them – at least if they bothered to open their mouths at all. Quite a lot of them never seemed to do so and instead spent their

whole time playing. Every so often a scuffle would break out. Then they would take out their wooden bowls and crack each other over the head. This scene provoked a curious reaction in me. On the one hand, I told myself that these monks were extremely stupid. On the other, I could not help envying them. They seemed not to have a care in the world. But when their fights became violent, I grew frightened and went away.

To the west, I could see out on to the market-place. This was easily my favourite view, but I had to spy out rather than look directly in case anyone saw me. If they did, everyone would come running over to prostrate themselves. I could only peer through the curtains, feeling like a criminal. I remember that the first or second time I stayed at the Jokhang, aged seven or eight, I disgraced myself rather badly. The sight of all those people down there was too much for me. I boldly poked my head through the curtain. But, as if this were not bad enough, I remember blowing bubbles of spit which fell on several people's heads as they threw themselves down to the ground far below! Afterwards, I am glad to say that the young Dalai Lama learned some self-discipline.

I loved peeping down on to the market stalls and remember once seeing a small wooden model of a gun. I sent someone to go out and buy it for me. I paid for it out of some of the offering money put out by pilgrims, which occasionally I used to help myself to, for I was not officially allowed to handle money. In fact, even to this day, I do not have direct dealings with it. All my income and expenditure is handled by my Private Office.

One of the other joys of staying at the Jokhang was the chance to make new friends amongst the sweepers there. As usual, all my spare time was spent in their company and I think that they were as sorry when I left as I was. However, I remember one year when the people with whom I had made such firm friends during the previous festival turned out not to be there any longer. I wondered why, as I was very much looking forward to seeing them all again. I demanded to know what had happened from the single one that remained. He told me that the other ten had all been sacked for

theft. After I had gone last time, they let themselves into my apartment by climbing down through the ceiling skylight and made off with various items – gold butter lamps and the like. So much for the company I kept!

The last day of the *Monlam* festival was given over to outdoor activities. Firstly, a large statue of Maitreya, the Buddha to come, would lead a procession round the perimeter of the old city. This route was known as the *Lingkhor*. I have heard that it no longer exists thanks to Chinese development of the capital, but the *Barkhor*, or inner perimeter which runs around the immediate outside of the Jokhang, does still stand. In former times, devout pilgrims would prostrate themselves bodily along the entire length of the *Lingkhor* as a devotional duty.

Soon after the statue had completed its circuit, there would be a general commotion as people turned their attention to sporting activities. These were great fun and involved both horse races and running races for members of the public. The former were rather unusual in that the animals were riderless. They were released beyond Drepung monastery and guided towards the centre of Lhasa by their grooms and spectators. Just before the horses arrived, the would-be athletes competing in the running race would also set off over a shorter distance, also towards the city centre. This tended to result in enjoyable confusion as both arrived simultaneously. However, one year there was an unfortunate incident when some of the human competitors grabbed hold of the tails of passing horses and took a tow. Immediately after the races were over, the Lord Chamberlain accused those whom he thought were involved. Most of them were members of my household. I was very sorry when I heard they were likely to be punished. In the end, I was able, for once, to intervene on their behalf.

Certain aspects of the *Monlam* festival affected the entire population of Lhasa intimately. For, in accordance with ancient tradition, the civil administration of the city was given up to the abbot of Drepung monastery. He then appointed, from amongst his monks, a staff and policemen to maintain law and order. This was imposed strictly and any misdemeanours were punished with

quite heavy fines. One of the things that was always insisted upon by the abbot was cleanliness. As a result, this was the time of year when every building was freshly whitewashed and the streets thoroughly cleaned.

One thing about the New Year that was important to me as a child was the tradition of baking *khabse* or *Losar* cookies. Every year, at the time of the festivities, my Master of the Kitchen would make batches of delicious pastry, fashioned into extravagant shapes and deep fried. One year, I decided to try my hand at some baking myself. Everything went well and I was quite impressed by my handiwork, so I told the Master of the Kitchen that I would come back to do some more next day.

This I did, but unfortunately the oil that was put out for my use on the second occasion was fresh and had not been properly boiled. As a result, when I dropped my mix into the pan, it erupted like a volcano. My right arm was covered in boiling oil, which caused immediate blistering. My chief memory of the event, however, is of one of the cooks, an elderly man who took a lot of snuff and was not easily excited, running over with something that looked like whipped cream which he started to apply to my arm. Normally he was a very jovial person, but on this occasion he was extremely flustered. I remember thinking how comical he looked with grains of snuff and bits of snot coming out of his nose, and a very serious expression on his heavily pock-marked face.

Of all the festivals, the one that I most enjoyed was the week-long opera festival, which began on the first day of the seventh month each year. This involved performances by various troupes of dancers, singers and actors from all over Tibet. They gave their performances on a paved area situated on the far side of, but adjacent to, the Yellow Wall. I myself watched the proceedings from a makeshift enclosure erected on the top of one of the buildings that abutted the wall on the inside. Amongst the other spectators were all the members of Government, and their wives – who used the occasion as an excuse to compete with one another in terms of jewellery and dress. However, this rivalry was not confined to the ladies. For this was also the favourite time of the

sweepers at the Norbulingka. In the days preceding the festivities, they spent much time and energy borrowing and hiring clothes and ornaments, preferably coral, in which to parade. Their moment came when they carried forward vessels containing the flowers that were to be judged in a horticultural competition which was held during the festival.

I will never forget one of my sweepers, who always appeared wearing a special hat, of which he was immensely proud. It had a long, red silk tassel that he arranged artfully round his neck and over his shoulder.

Members of the public also came to watch the theatricals, although they did not have special seating arrangements unlike the government officials and aristocracy. As well as coming to see the performances, they came to marvel at the high officials in their ceremonial finery. They also used to take the opportunity to circumambulate, prayer-wheel in hand, the perimeter of the Yellow Wall. (A prayer-wheel consists of a cylinder, containing prayers, which is rotated whilst a person recites *mantras*.)

Many people other than Lhasans came too: tall, swashbuckling Khampas from the east, their long hair extravagantly braided with red tassels; Nepalese and Sikkimese traders from the south; and, of course, the small, gaunt figures of the nomad farmers. People dedicated themselves to having fun – something that Tibetans are naturally good at. We are for the most part quite simple people, who like nothing better than a good show and a good party. Even a few members of the monastic community joined in, though illegally and therefore in disguise.

It was such a happy time! People sat and talked during the performances, so familiar were they with the songs and dances that they knew every incident by heart. Almost everyone brought a picnic and tea and *chang* and they would come and go as they pleased. Young women suckled babies at their breasts. Children ran to and fro – shrieking and laughing – stopping only for seconds to stare wide-eyed as a new performer, clad in wild and colourful costume, made his entrance. At this too, the expressions of the old men who sat alone and stony-faced would brighten and for a

moment the old women would cease their chatter. Then everything would carry on as before. And all the while, the sun bore steadily down through thin, exhilarating mountain air.

The only time you could be sure of everyone's complete attention was when satires were performed. Then the actors appeared dressed as monks and nuns, high officials and even the state oracles to lampoon public figures.

Other important festivals during the year included the festival of *Mabakala* held on the eighth day of the third month. This was when summer officially began and on that day all members of the Government changed into summer dress. This was also the day when I shifted from the Potala to the Norbulingka. On the fifteenth day of the fifth month was *Zamling Chisang*, Universal Prayer Day, which marked the beginning of a week-long holiday period when most of the population of Lhasa who were not either monks, nuns or members of the Government decamped in tents to the plains outside Lhasa for a series of picnics and other social amusements. Actually, I am fairly certain that some people who were not supposed to attend this did so, but in disguise. Then on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month, which marked the death of Tsonkapa, the great reformer of Buddhism in Tibet and founder of the *Gelugpa* tradition, there was a special festival. It involved torchlight processions and the lighting of innumerable butter lamps throughout the land. This event also marked the day when winter formally began, officials changed into winter dress and I moved reluctantly back to the Potala. I longed to be old enough to follow the example of my predecessor who, having participated in this procession, used to return to the Norbulingka, which he much preferred.

There were also a number of purely secular events held at different times during the year, for example the horse fair, which was held during the first month. There was likewise a particular time of year, autumn, when nomads brought yaks to be sold to the slaughtermen. This was a very sad time for me. I could not bear to think of all those poor creatures going to their deaths. If ever I saw animals being taken behind the Norbulingka on their

way to market, I always tried to buy them by sending someone out to act on my behalf. That way I was able to save their lives. Over the years I should imagine I must have rescued at least ten thousand animals, and probably many more. When I consider this, I realise that this extremely naughty child did do some good after all.

Invasion: The Storm Breaks



ON THE DAY before the opera festival of summer 1950, I was just coming out of the bathroom at the Norbulingka when I felt the earth beneath my feet begin to move. It was late evening and I had been chatting to one of my attendants whilst I washed before going to bed. The facilities were then situated in a small outbuilding a few yards from my quarters so I was outside when this happened. At first, I thought we must have had another earthquake as Tibet is quite prone to seismological activity. Sure enough, when I went back inside, I noticed that several pictures hanging on the wall were out of alignment. Just then, there was a terrific crash in the distance. I rushed back outside, followed by several sweepers. As we looked up into the sky, there was another crash and another. It was like an artillery barrage – which is what we assumed to be the cause of both the tremors and the noise: a test of some sort being carried out by the Tibetan army. In all, there were thirty to forty explosions.

Next day we learned that, far from being a military test, it was indeed some sort of natural phenomenon. Some people even reported seeing a strange red glow in the skies in the direction from which the noise came. It gradually emerged that people had experienced it throughout the length and breadth of Tibet: certainly in Chamdo, nearly 400 hundred miles to the east, and in Sakya, 300 miles away to the south-west. I have even heard that it was observed in Calcutta. As the scale of this strange event began to sink in, people naturally began to say that this was more than a simple earthquake: it was an omen.

Now from very early on, I have always had a great interest in science. So naturally, I wanted to find a scientific basis for this extraordinary event. When I saw Heinrich Harrer a few days later, I asked him what he thought was the explanation, not only for the earth tremors, but more importantly for the strange celestial phenomena. He told me he was certain that the two were related. It must be a cracking of the earth's crust caused by the upward movement of whole mountains.

To me, this sounded plausible, but unlikely. Why would a cracking of the earth's crust manifest itself as a glow in the night sky accompanied by thunderclaps and, furthermore, how could it be that it was witnessed over such immense distances? I did not think that Harrer's theories told the whole story. Even to this day I do not. Perhaps there is a scientific explanation, but my own feeling is that what happened is presently beyond science, something truly mysterious. In this case, I find it much easier to accept that what I witnessed was metaphysical. At any rate, warning from on high or mere rumblings from below, the situation in Tibet deteriorated rapidly thereafter.

As I have said, this event occurred just before the opera festival. Two days later, the omen, if that is what it was, began to fulfil itself. Towards evening, during one of the performances, I caught sight of a messenger running in my direction. On reaching my enclosure, he was immediately shown in to Tathag Rinpoché, the Regent, who occupied the other half. I realised at once that something was wrong. Under normal circumstances government matters would have had to wait until the following week. Naturally, I was almost beside myself with curiosity. What could this mean? Something dreadful must have happened. Yet being still so young and having no political power, I would have to wait until Tathag Rinpoché saw fit to tell me what was going on. However, I had already discovered that it was possible, by standing on a chest, to peep through a window set high up in the wall separating his room from mine. As the messenger went in, I hoisted myself up, and, holding my breath, began to spy on the Regent. I could see his face quite clearly as he read the letter. It became very grave. After

a few minutes, he went out and I heard him give orders for the *Kashag* to be summoned.

I discovered in due course that the Regent's letter was in fact a telegram from the Governor of Kham, based in Chamdo, reporting a raid on a Tibetan post by Chinese soldiers, causing the death of the responsible officer. This was grave news indeed. Already the previous autumn there had been cross-border incursions by Chinese Communists, who stated their intention of liberating Tibet from the hands of imperialist aggressors – whatever that might mean. This was despite the fact that all Chinese officials living in Lhasa had been expelled in 1949.

It now looked as if the Chinese were making good their threat. If that were so, I was well aware that Tibet was in grave danger for our army mustered no more than 8,500 officers and men. It would be no match for the recently victorious People's Liberation Army (PLA).

I remember little else of that year's opera festival, save for the desolation I felt in my heart. Not even the magical dances performed to the slow beat of drums could hold my attention, the players in their elaborate costumes (some dressed to look like skeletons, representing Death) solemnly and rhythmically following an ancient choreography.

Two months later, in October, our worst fears were fulfilled. News reached Lhasa that an army of 80,000 soldiers of the PLA had crossed the Dri Chu river east of Chamdo. Reports on Chinese Radio announced that, on the anniversary of the Communists coming to power in China, the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet had begun.

So the axe had fallen. And soon, Lhasa must fall. We could not possibly resist such an onslaught. In addition to its shortage of manpower, the Tibetan army suffered from having few modern weapons and almost no training. Throughout the Regency, it had been neglected. For Tibetans, despite their history, basically love peace and to be in the army was considered the lowest form of life: soldiers were held to be like butchers. And although some extra regiments were hurriedly sent from elsewhere in Tibet, and

a new one was raised, the quality of troops sent to face the Chinese was not high.

It is useless to speculate on the possible result had things been otherwise. It is necessary only to say that the Chinese lost large numbers of men in their conquest of Tibet: in some areas, they did meet with fierce resistance and, in addition to direct casualties of war, they suffered greatly from difficulties of supply on the one hand and the harsh climate on the other. Many died from starvation; others must certainly have succumbed to altitude sickness, which has always plagued, and sometimes actually killed, foreigners in Tibet. But as to the fighting, no matter how large or how well prepared the Tibetan army had been, in the end its efforts would have been futile. For even then, the Chinese population was more than a hundred times larger than ours.

This threat to the freedom of Tibet did not go unnoticed in the world. The Indian Government, supported by the British Government, protested to the People's Republic of China and stated that the invasion was not in the interests of peace. On 7 November 1950, the *Kashag* and the Government appealed to the United Nations Organisation to intercede on our behalf. But sadly, Tibet, following her policy of peaceful isolation, had never sought to become a member and nothing came of this – nor from two further telegrams sent before the year was out.

As winter drew on and the news got worse, there began to be talk of giving the Dalai Lama his majority. People started to advocate my being given full temporal power – two years early. My sweepers reported to me that posters had been put up around Lhasa vilifying the Government and calling for my immediate enthronement, and there were songs to the same effect.

There were two schools of thought: one consisted of people who looked to me for leadership in this crisis; the other, of people who felt that I was still too young for such responsibility. I agreed with the latter group, but, unfortunately, I was not consulted. Instead, the Government decided that the matter should be put to the oracle. It was a very tense occasion, at the end of which

the *kuten*, tottering under the weight of his huge, ceremonial head-dress, came over to where I sat and laid a *kata*, a white silk offering scarf, on my lap with the words '*Thu-la bap*', 'His time has come.'

Dorje Drakden had spoken. Tathag Rinpoché at once prepared to retire as Regent, though he was to remain as my Senior Tutor. It remained only for the state astrologers to select the day for my enthronement. They chose 17 November 1950 as the most auspicious date before the end of the year. I was rather saddened by these developments. A month ago I had been a carefree young man eagerly looking forward to the annual opera festival. Now I was faced with the immediate prospect of leading my country as it prepared for war. But in retrospect, I realise that I should not have been surprised. For several years now, the oracle had shown undisguised contempt for the Government whilst treating me with great politeness.

At the beginning of November, about a fortnight before the day of my investiture, my eldest brother arrived in Lhasa. I hardly knew him. As Taktser Rinpoché, he was by now abbot of Kumbum monastery where I had spent those first lonely eighteen months after my discovery. As soon as I set eyes on him, I knew that he had suffered greatly. He was in a terrible state, extremely tense and anxious. He stammered as he told me his story. Because Amdo the province where we were both born, and in which Kumbum is situated, lies so close to China, it had quickly fallen under control of the Communists. Straight away, he had been put under duress. Restrictions were put on the activities of the monks and he himself was kept virtual prisoner in his monastery. At the same time, the Chinese endeavoured to indoctrinate him in the new Communist way of thinking and to try to subvert him. They had a plan whereby they would set him free to go to Lhasa if he would undertake to persuade me to accept Chinese rule. If I resisted, he was to kill me. They would then reward him.

That was a strange proposal. First of all, the idea of killing any living creature is anathema to Buddhists. So the suggestion that he might actually assassinate the Dalai Lama for personal gain

showed how little understanding the Chinese had of the Tibetan character.

After a year during which my brother saw his community turned upside down by the Chinese, he gradually came to the conclusion that he must escape to Lhasa to warn me and the Government of what lay in store for Tibet if the Chinese conquered us. The only way he could do this was by pretending to go along with them. So finally he agreed to do their bidding.

I gasped as he told me this. Up until now, I had almost no knowledge of the Chinese. And of Communists I was almost entirely ignorant, although I was aware that they had been causing terrible hardship for the people of Mongolia. Aside from that, I knew only what I had gleaned from the pages of the odd copy of *Life* magazine that came into my hands. But my brother now made it clear that they were not only non-religious but were actually opposed to the practice of religion. I became very scared as Taktser Rinpoché told me that he was convinced that the only hope for us was to secure foreign support and to resist the Chinese by force of arms.

The Buddha forbade killing, but he indicated that under certain circumstances it could be justified. And to my brother's mind, the present circumstances justified it. He would therefore renounce his monastic vows, disrobe and go abroad as an emissary for Tibet. He would try to make contact with the Americans. It was certain, he felt, that they would support the idea of a free Tibet.

I was shocked to hear this, but before I could protest he urged me to leave Lhasa. Although a number of other people had said the same thing, not many held this view. But my brother begged me to take his advice, no matter what the majority might say. The danger was great, he said, and I must on no account fall into Chinese hands.

After our meeting, my brother had discussions with various members of the Government before leaving the capital. I saw him once or twice more, but could do nothing to persuade him to change his mind. His terrible experiences over the past year had convinced him that there was no other way. I did not brood on

the matter, however, as I had preoccupations of my own. My enthronement ceremony was only a few days away.

To mark the occasion, I decided to grant a general amnesty. On the day of my accession, all prisoners were to be set free. This meant that the prison at Shöl would now be empty. I was pleased to have this opportunity, although there were times that I regretted it. I no longer had the pleasure of our tenuous friendship. When I trained my telescope on the compound, it was empty save for a few dogs scavenging for scraps. It was as if something was missing from my life.

On the morning of the 17th, I rose an hour or two earlier than usual, whilst it was still dark. As I dressed, my Master of the Robes handed me a piece of green cloth to tie round my waist. This was on the instructions of the astrologers, who deemed green to be an auspicious colour. I decided against breakfast as I knew that the ceremony would be a long one and I did not want to be distracted by any calls of nature. However, the astrologers had also stipulated that I must eat an apple before the proceedings began. I had difficulty forcing it down, I remember. That done, I went to the chapel where the enthronement was to take place at dawn.

It was to be a splendid occasion with the entire Government present, along with the various foreign officials resident in Lhasa all attired in their most formal and colourful regalia. Unfortunately, it was very dark so I was unable to see much detail. During the ceremony, I was handed the Golden Wheel symbolising my assumption of temporal power. However, there is not much more that I remember – save an insistent and growing need to relieve my bladder. I blamed the astrologers. Their idea of giving me an apple to eat was clearly at the root of the problem. I had never had much faith in them and this reinforced my bad opinion.

I have always felt that since the most important days of a person's life, those of their birth and death, cannot be set in consultation with astrologers, it is not worth bothering with any of the others. However, that is only my personal opinion. It does not mean that I think that the practice of astrology by Tibetans should be

discontinued. It is very important from the point of view of our culture.

Anyway, my situation on this occasion went from bad to worse. I ended up by passing a message down to the Lord Chamberlain begging him to speed things up. But our ceremonies are long and complicated and I began to fear it would never end.

When eventually the proceedings drew to a close, I found myself undisputed leader of six million people facing the threat of a full-scale war. And I was still only fifteen years old. It was an impossible situation to be in, but I saw it as my duty to avoid this disaster if at all possible. My first task was to appoint two new Prime Ministers.

The reason for having to appoint two was that in our system of government, every post from Prime Minister down was duplicated, each being filled by both a layman and a monk. This derived from the time of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, who was the first to assume temporal power in addition to his position as spiritual head of state. Unfortunately, although the arrangement had worked well enough in the past, it was hopelessly inadequate for the twentieth century. Besides, after almost twenty years of Regency, the Government had become quite corrupt, as I have already said.

Needless to say, few reforms were ever introduced. Not even the Dalai Lama could do this, for whatever he suggested had first to be referred to the Prime Ministers, then to the *Kashag*, then to each subordinate member of the Executive and finally to the National Assembly. If anyone objected to his proposals, it was extremely difficult for the matter to go any further.

The same happened when reforms were proposed by the National Assembly, except in reverse. In the event that a piece of legislation was finally presented to the Dalai Lama, he might then wish to make amendments, in which case these were written on to strips of parchment and stuck on to the original document, which was then sent back down the line for approval. But what made it even more difficult to instigate reforms was the religious community's fear of foreign influence, which they were convinced would damage Buddhism in Tibet.

I chose a man called Lobsang Tashi as the monk Prime Minister and an experienced lay administrator, Lukhangwa, as his opposite number.

That done, I decided in consultation with them and the *Kashag* to send delegations abroad to America, Great Britain and Nepal in the hope of persuading these countries to intervene on our behalf. Another was to go to China in the hope of negotiating a withdrawal. These missions left towards the end of the year. Shortly afterwards, with the Chinese consolidating their forces in the east, we decided that I should move to southern Tibet with the most senior members of Government. That way, if the situation deteriorated, I could easily seek exile across the border with India. Meanwhile, Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa were to remain in Lhasa in an acting capacity: I would take the seals of state with me.

Refuge in the South

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THERE WAS much to organise and it was several weeks before we left. Moreover, all preparations had to be made secretly. My Prime Ministers feared that if word leaked out that the Dalai Lama was preparing to leave, there would be widespread panic. However, I am sure that many people must have realised what was happening as several large baggage trains were sent on ahead – some of which, unknown even to me, carried fifty or sixty strong-boxes of treasure, mostly gold biscuits and bars of silver from the vaults at the Potala. This was the idea of Kenrap Tenzin, my former Master of the Robes who had recently been promoted to *Chikyab Kenpo*. I was furious when I found out. Not that I minded about the treasure, but my youthful pride was wounded. I felt that by not telling me, Kenrap Tenzin was still treating me as a child.

I awaited the day of departure with a mixture of anxiety and anticipation. On the one hand, I was very unhappy at the prospect of abandoning my people. I felt a heavy responsibility towards them. On the other hand, I eagerly looked forward to travelling. To add to the excitement, the Lord Chamberlain decided that I should disguise myself and dress in layman's clothes. He was worried that people might actually try to prevent me from leaving when they found out what was happening. So he advised me to remain incognito. This delighted me. Not only would I now be able to see something of my country, but I would be able to do so as an ordinary observer, not as Dalai Lama.

We left Lhasa at lead of night. It was cold but very light, I remember. The stars in Tibet shine with a brightness I have not seen anywhere else in the world. It was also very still and my heart missed

a beat every time one of the ponies stumbled as we made our way stealthily from the courtyard at the foot of the Potala, past the Norbulingka and Drepung monastery. Yet I was not really afraid.

Our final destination was Dromo (pronounced Tromo), which lay 200 miles away, just inside the border with Sikkim. The journey would take at least ten days, barring mishap. It was not long, however, before we ran into trouble. A few days after leaving Lhasa, we arrived at a remote village called Jang, where the monks of Ganden, Drepung and Sera were gathered for their winter debating camp. They realised as soon as they saw the size of our column that this was no ordinary move. Altogether we numbered at least two hundred people – of whom fifty were high officials – and a similar number of pack animals, and the monks guessed that I must be somewhere there.

Luckily, I was right at the front and my disguise proved effective. No one stopped me. But as I rode past, I could see that the monks were in a highly emotional state. Many had tears in their eyes. A few moments later, they stopped Ling Rinpoché who followed me. I glanced round and realised they were begging him to turn back with me. It was an extremely tense moment. Feelings were running high. The monks had such faith in me as their Precious Protector that they could not bear the thought of my leaving them. Ling Rinpoché explained that I did not intend to be away for long, and reluctantly the monks agreed to let us continue. Then, throwing themselves down on the track, they pleaded that I should return as soon as possible.

After this unfortunate incident we had no further trouble and I was able to make the most of the situation by going on ahead, still in disguise, and using every occasion I could to stop and talk with people. I realised that I now had a valuable opportunity to find out what life was really like for my fellow countrymen and women and managed to have a number of conversations during which I kept my identity secret. From these, I learned something about the petty injustices of life suffered by my people and resolved as soon as I could to set about making changes to help them.

We reached Gyantse (Tibet's fourth largest city) after almost a week of travel. Here it was impossible to maintain secrecy and hundreds turned out to greet me. A posse of shabby but enthusiastic Indian cavalry, which provided the escort for the Indian Trade Mission, also presented arms. But there was no time for formalities and we hurried on, arriving at Dromo in January 1951 after a journey of almost a fortnight.

We were all exhausted. But personally I felt a tremendous sense of excitement. The place itself was nothing special, consisting in fact of several villages quite close together, but its landscape was spectacular. It lay just at the point where the Amo-chu valley divides into two, at around 9,000 feet above sea level.

A river ran along the bottom of the valley, close enough to the village that its roar could be heard day and night. Not far from the water, the hills rose steeply. At some places, the river ~~was~~ bordered by vertical cliffs soaring straight up into the crystal blue sky. And in the near distance stood the mighty peaks which give Tibet both majesty and menace. Here and there were clumps of pine and thickets of rhododendron, peppering acres of green pasture. The climate, as I was to discover, was rather damp. Because it is situated so close to the Indian plains, Dromo is subject to monsoon rains. But even then the sun shines frequently, shouldering its way through massive cloud banks and washing the valleys in a sparkling, mystic light. I longed to explore the area and climb some of the more accessible mountains when they were carpeted with wild spring flowers, but for the time being there were several more months of winter.

On arrival in Dromo, I stayed first at the house of a local official – the one who had sent me toys and apples – before moving to Dungkhar, a small monastery situated on a hill with a view of the entire Dromo valley. It was not long before we were settled in and I was back into my usual routine of prayers, meditation, retreats and study. But although I could have wished for a bit more free time and although I missed some of my usual diversions in Lhasa, I felt that something within me had changed. This was perhaps in response to the sense of freedom I caught from being

able to do away with much of the rigid protocol and formality that was so much a part of my life in Lhasa. And whilst I missed the company of my friends the sweepers, the void was filled by the extra responsibility I felt. One thing that the journey down had convinced me of was the need to study hard and learn as much as I could. I owed it to the faith of my people to be the best person I could be.

One significant event that took place soon after reaching Dromo was the arrival of a Sri Lankan monk, who had with him an important relic which I received at a very moving ceremony.

With Lukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi left behind in Lhasa, my main advisors were the *Kashag*, the Lord Chamberlain, Ling Rinpoché (now my Senior Tutor) and Trijang Rinpoché, the senior *tsenshap* who had recently been appointed my Junior Tutor. My eldest brother, Taktser Rinpoché, was also there. He had arrived a few weeks previously on his way to India.

Our first piece of bad news was that only one of the delegations sent abroad before I left Lhasa had reached its final destination: the one to China. Each of the others had been turned away. This was devastating. Tibet had always maintained the friendliest relations with Nepal and India. After all, they are our closest neighbours. As for Britain, thanks to Colonel Younghusband's expedition, there had been a British Trade Mission in Tibet for almost half a century. Even with Indian independence in 1947, the Mission at first continued to be run by the same Englishman, Hugh Richardson. So it was almost impossible to believe that the British Government was now agreeing that China had some claim to authority over Tibet. They seemed to have forgotten that in the past, for example when Younghusband concluded his treaty with the Tibetan Government, they had found it necessary to deal with Tibet as a fully sovereign state. Nor was this their position in 1914, when they convened a conference (the Simla Convention) to which Tibet and China were both invited independently. Besides, the English and Tibetan peoples had always had good relations. My countrymen and women found them to have a sense of decency, justice and humour which they respected very much.

As for America, in 1948 Washington had welcomed our trade delegation, which even had a meeting with the Vice-President. So they too had obviously changed their minds. I remember feeling great sorrow when I realised what this really meant: Tibet must expect to face the entire might of Communist China alone.

The next development, after the return of all but the one delegation within only a few weeks, was the arrival of a long report from Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Governor of Chamdo. Most of the Chamdo region was by now in Chinese hands and the report had been taken to Lhasa by one of the area's leading merchants. He saw it safely into the hands of Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa, who in turn sent it on to me. It set out in painful and gloomy detail the nature of the Chinese threat and made clear that, unless some sort of settlement could be reached, troops of the PLA would soon march on Lhasa. There would inevitably be great loss of life if this happened and I wanted, at all cost, to avoid this.

Ngabo suggested that we had no alternative but to negotiate. If it was agreeable to the Tibetan Government, and if we would send some assistants, he proposed to go in person to try to open a dialogue with the Chinese in Peking. I contacted Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa in Lhasa to find out their opinion. They replied that they felt such negotiations should take place in Lhasa, but since the situation was desperate, they would have to agree to Peking as the venue.

Because he had shown no hesitation in offering himself for the task, I concluded that Ngabo, whom I knew to be a very decisive administrator, should go to the Chinese capital. Accordingly, I sent two officials from Dromo and two from Lhasa to accompany him. I hoped that he could make it clear to the Chinese leadership that Tibet did not require 'liberation', just continued peaceful relations with our great neighbour.

Meanwhile, spring came, and with it the outpourings of Nature. The hills were soon splashed with wild flowers; the grass took on an altogether new and richer shade of green; and the air became scented with fresh and surprising smells – of jasmine, honeysuckle

and lavender. From my rooms in the monastery, I could look down towards the river where farmers came to graze their sheep, yaks and *dzomos*. And I could watch, enviously, the groups of picnickers that came almost daily to build a little fire and cook down by the water's edge. I was so enchanted with all that I saw that I felt brave enough to ask Ling Rinpoché for some time off. He must have felt the same way as, to my surprise, he granted me a holiday. I could not remember being happier as I spent several days roaming around the area. On one of my excursions I visited a Bon monastery. My only sadness was that I knew that troubled times lay ahead. It could not be long now before we heard from Ngabo in Peking. I half expected bad news, but nothing could have prepared me for the shock when it came.

At the monastery I had an old Bush radio receiver which ran off a six-volt battery. Every evening, I would listen to the Tibetan language broadcasts of Radio Peking. Sometimes I did so with one or other official, but often I listened alone. The majority of the broadcasts were taken up with propaganda about the 'Glorious Motherland', but I must say that I was very impressed with much of what I heard. There was constant talk of industrial progress and of the equality of all China's citizens. This seemed like the perfect combination of material and spiritual progress. However, one evening, as I sat alone, there was a very different sort of programme. A harsh, crackling voice announced that a Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet had that day been signed by representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China and what they called the 'Local Government' of Tibet.

I could not believe my ears. I wanted to rush out and call everybody in, but I sat transfixed. The speaker described how 'over the last hundred years or more' aggressive imperialist forces had penetrated into Tibet and 'carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations'. It added that 'under such conditions, the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering'. I felt physically ill as I listened to this unbelievable mixture of lies and fanciful clichés.

But there was worse to come. Clause One of the 'Agreement' stated that 'The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet. The Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland – the People's Republic of China.' What could it mean? The last foreign army to have been stationed on Tibetan soil was the Manchu army in 1912. As far as I was aware (and now know), there was no more than a handful of Europeans in Tibet at that time. And the idea of Tibet 'returning to the Motherland' was shameless invention. Tibet had never been part of China. In fact, as I have mentioned already, Tibet has ancient claims to large parts of China. On top of which, our respective peoples are ethnically and racially distinct. We do not speak the same language, nor is our script anything like the Chinese script. As the International Commission of Jurists stated subsequently in their report:

'Tibet's position on the expulsion of the Chinese in 1912 can fairly be described as one of de facto independence . . . it is therefore submitted that the events of 1911-12 mark the re-emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign state, independent in fact and in law of Chinese control.'

What was most alarming, however, was that Ngabo had not been empowered to sign anything on my behalf, only to negotiate. I had kept the seals of state with me at Dromo to ensure that he could not. So he must have been coerced. But it was several more months before I heard the whole story. In the meantime, all we had to go on was the radio broadcast (repeated several times), together with a number of self-congratulatory sermons about the joys of Communism, the glory of Chairman Mao, the wonders of the People's Republic of China and all the good things that the Tibetan people could look forward to now that our destinies were united. It was quite silly.

The details of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' were chilling all the same. Clause Two announced that the 'Local Government' of Tibet would 'actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence'. This meant, so

far as I could judge, that our forces were expected to surrender at once. Clause Eight continued the theme by saying that the Tibetan army was to be absorbed into the Chinese army – as if such a thing were possible. Then in Clause Fourteen we learned that, from now on, Tibet was to be deprived of all authority over the conduct of her external affairs. Interspersed with these more telling clauses were others assuring Tibet of religious freedom and protecting my position and the present political system. But for all these platitudes one thing was clear: from now on, the Land of Snows answered to the People's Republic of China.

As the unhappy reality of our position began to sink in, several people, notably Taktser Rinpoché in a long letter from Calcutta, urged me to leave for India at once. They argued that the only hope for Tibet lay in finding allies to help us fight the Chinese. When I reminded them that our missions to India, Nepal, Great Britain and the United States had already been turned back, they countered that once these countries realised the gravity of the situation, they would be sure to offer their support. They pointed out that the United States was implacably opposed to Communist expansionism and was already fighting a war in Korea for that very reason. I could see the logic of their arguments, but somehow felt the fact that America was already engaged in fighting on one front lessened the likelihood of her wanting to open up a second.

A few days later, a long telegram arrived from the delegation in Peking. It did not say very much beyond repeating what we had already heard on the radio. Obviously Ngabo was being prevented from telling the truth. Recently, some members of the delegation have related in their memoirs the full story of how they were forced to sign the 'Agreement' under duress and use counterfeit seals of the Tibetan state. But from Ngabo's telegram I could only guess at what had happened. However, he did say that the new Governor-General of Tibet, General Chiang Chin-wu, was en route to Dromo via India. We should expect him shortly.

There was nothing to do but wait. In the meantime, I received the abbots of the three great university monasteries, Ganden, Drepung and Sera, who had recently arrived. Having been told

about the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement', they urged me to return to Lhasa as soon as possible. The Tibetan people were most anxious that I should return, they said. They were supported in this by both Lukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi, who had sent messages with them.

A few days later, I heard once more from Taktser Rinpoché, who had apparently succeeded in making contact with the American Consulate in Calcutta and been granted permission to visit the United States. Again he urged me to come to India, saying that the Americans were very anxious to make contact with Tibet. He suggested that if I were to go into exile, some arrangement for assistance could be negotiated between our two Governments. My brother concluded his letter by saying that it was imperative that I should arrive in India as soon as possible, adding that the Chinese delegation was already in Calcutta, en route to Dromo. The implication here was that if I did not make a move immediately, it would be too late.

At about this time, I also received a letter in similar vein from Heinrich Harrer, who had left Lhasa just before me and was now in Kalimpong. He firmly stated his view that I should seek exile in India – and was supported in this by a few of my officials. However, Ling Rinpoché was equally adamant that I should not.

So now I was faced with a dilemma. If my brother's letter was anything to go by, it seemed that there might, after all, be some hope of winning foreign support. But what would this mean for my people? Should I really leave before even meeting with the Chinese? And if I did, would our new-found allies see us through thick and thin? As I pondered these thoughts, I continuously came up against two particular considerations. Firstly, it was obvious to me that the most likely result of a pact with America or anyone else was war. And war meant bloodshed. Secondly, I reasoned that although America was a very powerful country, it was thousands of miles away. China, on the other hand, was our neighbour and, whilst materially less powerful than the United States, easily had numerical superiority. It might therefore take many years to resolve the dispute by armed struggle.

Furthermore, America was a democracy and I could not believe that her people would put up with unlimited casualties. It was easy to imagine a time when we Tibetans would be on our own once more. The result would then be the same, China would have her way and, in the interim, there would have been the loss of countless lives, Tibetan, Chinese and American, all to no purpose whatever. I therefore concluded that the best course of action was to stay put and await the arrival of the Chinese General. He must be human after all.

On 16 July 1951, the Chinese delegation duly reached Dromo. A messenger came running to the monastery to announce its imminent arrival. At this news, I felt both great excitement and great apprehension. What would they look like, these people? I was half convinced that they would all have horns on their heads. I went out on to the balcony and looked out eagerly down the valley towards the town, scanning the buildings with my telescope. It was a fine day, I remember, although it was the middle of the rainy season and water vapour rose in swirls from the ground as it warmed under the summer sun. Suddenly I spied movement. A group of my officials was heading in the direction of the monastery. With them, I could make out three men in drab grey suits. They looked very insignificant next to the Tibetans, who wore the traditional red and gold silk robes of high office.

Our meeting together was coldly civil. General Chiang Chin-wu began by asking me whether I had heard of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. With the greatest reserve, I replied that I had. He then handed over a copy of it, together with two other documents. As he did so, I noticed that he was wearing a gold Rolex watch. Of these two supplementary documents, one dealt with the Tibetan army. The other explained what would happen if I elected to go into exile. It suggested that I would quickly realise that the Chinese had come in genuine friendship. I would then certainly want to return to my country. That being so, I would be welcomed back with open arms. Therefore, there was no point in leaving.

Next, General Chiang asked me when I intended to return to Lhasa. 'Soon,' I replied, not very helpfully, and continued to act

as aloof as possible. It was obvious by his question that he wanted to travel back to Lhasa with me so that we could enter the city together, symbolically. In the end, my officials managed to avoid this and he set off a day or two after me.

My first impression, then, was rather as I had suspected. Regardless of all the suspicion and anxiety I felt beforehand, during our meeting it became clear that this man, although supposedly my enemy, was in fact just another human being, an ordinary person like myself. This realisation had a lasting impact on me. It was another important lesson.

Having now met General Chiang, I was a bit happier about the prospect of returning to Lhasa. Preparations were put in hand for my return, along with all of my officials, and we set off towards the end of the month. This time, no attempt was made at secrecy and I travelled in much more elaborate style than on the way down. At practically every major village en route, I stopped to give audiences and short teachings to the local population. This afforded me the chance personally to tell people about what was happening in Tibet, how we had been invaded by a foreign army but how the Chinese were proclaiming friendship. At the same time, I gave a short discourse on a religious text which I generally selected for its relevance to whatever else I had to say. I continue to use this formula right up to the present day. I find it a good way of showing that religion has a lot to tell us, no matter what situation we find ourselves in. However, I am better at it now than I was then. In those days I lacked confidence, although it improved every time I spoke in public. Also, I found, as every teacher does, that there is nothing like teaching to help one learn.

I was glad that there was so much to do on this journey. Otherwise I might have had time to feel sad. All of my family were abroad, except my father, who had died when I was twelve, and Lobsang Samten, who accompanied me now, and my only travelling companion outside the household was Tathag Rinpoché. He had come to visit me at Dromo to pass on certain important teachings and was now on his way back to his own monastery, which lay just outside Lhasa. He had aged considerably since I

had last seen him during the previous winter, and now looked all of his seventy odd years. I was very happy to be in his company once more as not only was he an extremely kind man, but he was also a highly accomplished spiritual master. He was undoubtedly my most important *guru*. He initiated me into a great number of lineages and secret teachings, which had in turn been handed on to him by the most brilliant teachers of his day.

From Dromo we proceeded slowly to Gyantse, where the Indian cavalry turned out as before to present arms. But instead of hurrying through, I was able to remain for a few days. Then we set out for Samding monastery, home of Dorje Phagmo, one of the most important Bodhisattvas. It was also one of the most beautiful monasteries in all Tibet. The countryside on the way there was spectacular: cobalt blue lakes fringed with strips of lush green pasture on which thousands of sheep grazed. The views were more wonderful than anything I had ever seen, thanks to the crisp, clear summer light. Occasionally I caught sight of herds of deer and gazelle, which were in those days common throughout Tibet. I loved to see them stand nervously watching us approach, then spring away on their long sinuous legs.

For once I enjoyed being on horseback, though normally I am rather afraid of horses. I don't know why this should be as I can deal with almost any other creature, save caterpillars. I can pick up spiders and scorpions without hesitation, and I do not mind snakes very much, but I am not fond of horses and caterpillars leave me cold. Nevertheless, on this occasion, I thoroughly enjoyed riding across the open plains and was continually urging my mount on. It was actually a mule, called Grey Wheels, which had once belonged to Reting Rinpoché. It had excellent speed and stamina and I became quite good friends with it. The head groom did not approve of my choice, however. He considered it to be too small and undignified for the Dalai Lama to ride.

Samding monastery lay not far from the small town of Nangartse, which in turn is situated close to Yamdrok Lake, one of the most glorious stretches of water I have ever seen. Because there is no constant flow of water into and out of it, Yamdrok has

a miraculous turquoise colour which quite startles the senses. Sadly, I heard recently that the Chinese are planning to drain its water for a hydro-electric project, though what the long-term effect of this might be I hardly dare think.

In those days, Samding was a thriving community. Interestingly, the head of its monastery was by tradition a woman. This is not so surprising as it may sound as in Tibet there was no special discrimination against women. For example, there was an important female spiritual teacher at a hermitage located close to Lhasa, who, during my childhood, was famous throughout Tibet. And although she was not a *tulku*, she is still revered to this day. There were also quite a lot of nunneries, but this was the only monastery to be headed by a nun.

What is perhaps curious is that Dorje Phagmo is named after Vajravarahi, a female deity known as the Adamantine Sow. Legend has it that Vajravarahi's manifestation had the body of a woman and the face of a pig. A story is told of how in the eighteenth century, when some Mongolian raiders came to Nangartse, their chief sent word demanding that the abbess come before him. He received a courteously negative reply. This angered him and he set off at once for the monastery. With his warriors, he forced his way inside and found the congregation hall full of monks; on the throne, at their head, was a big, wild pig.

At the time of my visit, the head of Samding monastery was a young girl of about my own age. When I arrived, she came to pay her respects to me. I remember her as a very shy, young girl with long plaits in her hair. Subsequently she escaped to India, but then, for reasons unclear to me, she returned to Lhasa, where for many years she was exploited by our new masters. Tragically, the monastery and all its subsidiary buildings were destroyed like thousands of others since the late 1950s, and its ancient tradition has vanished.

I remained for two or three days at Samding before setting out on the final leg of the journey to Lhasa. Before returning to the Norbulingka, I accompanied Tathag Rinpoché to his monastery, which lay a few hours outside the city gates. Very kindly, he

vacated his rooms for me and moved out on to the grassy area behind the main building where debates were usually held. We met formally a number of times over the next few days. When we parted, I was quite sorry to be leaving him. I felt the deepest appreciation and respect for him. It saddened me very much that his reputation had been rather spoiled during his period of office as Regent. Even now I wonder whether it would not have been better if he had remained a lama and not been involved with politics. After all, he had no knowledge of government and no experience of administration. It was unreasonable to have expected him to do well at something for which he had received no training whatever. But that was Tibet. Because he was so well respected for his spiritual learning, it seemed only natural that he should be appointed to the second highest office in the land.

This was the last time that I saw Tathag Riñpoché alive. At our final meeting, he asked me not to feel bad about the prohibitions he had forced on me as a child. I felt very moved that such an old and venerable teacher should want to say this to me. Of course I understood.

I arrived back in Lhasa in the middle of August, after a nine-month absence. There was a big reception in my honour. It looked as if the entire population had turned out to see me and demonstrate its happiness at my return. I was deeply moved and, at the same time, extremely glad to be home. Only I knew full well that there had been many changes since the previous winter, that nothing was quite the same. It seemed that my people had similar feelings as, although they were full of joy, there was a note of hysteria in their enthusiasm. In the time that I had been away, reports had begun to reach the capital telling of atrocities against Tibetans in Amdo and Kham. Naturally, people were very much afraid of the future, though I knew that some felt that everything would be all right now that I was home.

On a personal level, I discovered to my great sadness that my favourite sweeper, Norbu Thondup, had died earlier in the year – the one who had been by far my most enthusiastic playmate. Throughout my childhood, this man had been a devoted friend

and a constant source of fun. When I was small, he frightened me by pulling hideous faces; when I grew older, he joined me in my roughest games. We often came to blows during my mock battles and I remember being quite vicious towards him at times, even to the point of drawing blood with the swords of my lead soldiers when he caught me up in his arms during our playful skirmishes. But he always gave as good as he got and never for a moment lost his great sense of humour. Now, of course, there was nothing I could do for him, although I was able to be of some service to his children, a son and a daughter. As a Buddhist, I knew that there was not much use in grieving. Yet at the same time I realised that in a way Norbu Thondup's death symbolised the end of my childhood. There could be no going back. In a few days' time, I was due to meet the Chinese delegation again. I must do for my people whatever I could, no matter how little, ever mindful that the peaceful pursuit of religion is one of the most important things in life. And I was still just sixteen years old.

I received General Chiang Chin-wu at the headquarters of my bodyguard, in accordance with tradition. This put him in a ferocious temper and he demanded to know why I was meeting him here and not in a more informal place. He was not a foreigner, he insisted, and did not wish to be treated as one. The fact that he could not speak Tibetan was apparently lost on him. At first I was taken aback at the sight of his bulging eyes and vermilion cheeks as he spluttered and stammered, banging the table with his fist. I subsequently discovered that the General was frequently given to outbursts of temper like this. Meanwhile, I reminded myself that he was probably a good person underneath – which, in fact, he turned out to be, and quite straightforward too.

As for his expressions of anger, I soon discovered these outbursts to be quite usual amongst the Chinese. I think it is because of this that they are treated so reverentially by some people, particularly by Europeans and Americans who tend to control their emotions more thoroughly. Fortunately, my religious training helped me to keep a perspective on his behaviour: I could see that in some ways it is quite good to express anger like this. Although not always

appropriate, it is usually better than pretending to be gentle and hiding resentment.

To begin with I did not have to deal with Chiang on a very frequent basis. I met with him perhaps once a month during the first year or two of the Chinese occupation. It was Lukhangwa, and Lobsang Tashi and the members of the *Kashag* who saw him most and they quickly learned to dislike his behaviour. They told me that he was arrogant, high-handed and without any sympathy for our different approach to life. Whenever we did meet, I saw for myself how he and his countrymen offended Tibetans at every turn.

I now see the first five or six weeks after my return to Lhasa from Dromo as a honeymoon period. It ended abruptly on 26 October 1951, when 3,000 troops of the Chinese 18th Route Army entered Lhasa. These were men who belonged to the division that had overcome our forces in Chamdo the previous year. With them came Generals Tan Kuan-sen and Chiang Kuo-ha, who, when they came for an audience, were accompanied by a Tibetan in national costume and fur hat. As they entered the room, this man made three formal prostrations. I thought this rather strange as he was evidently a member of the Chinese delegation. It turned out that he was the interpreter, and a loyal supporter of the Communists. When I later asked why he was not wearing the same Mao suits as his companions, he replied good-naturedly that I must not make the mistake of thinking that the Revolution was a revolution in dress; it was a revolution of ideas.

Also at around this time, my brother Gyalo Thondup arrived back in Lhasa. He did not stay long, but whilst in the city he met with the Chinese leadership several times. He then announced his intention to travel south, where my family had an estate given to them by the Government at the time of my enthronement. This visit to oversee the property was only a ruse, however, and I learned soon afterwards that he had slipped over the border into Assam, then known as NEFA, the North-Eastern Frontier Area. He intended to do what he could in the way of organising foreign support, but had not told me of his plans because he feared, on

account of my age, that I might let his secret out in an unguarded moment.

Within a short time, a further large detachment of the PLA reached Lhasa. I well remember their arrival. Because of the altitude, sound carries over great distances in Tibet and, as a result, I heard the slow, insistent thud of martial drums in my room at the Potala long before I saw any soldiers. I rushed out on to the roof with my telescope, where I watched them approach in a long, snaking column enveloped in clouds of dust. When they reached the city walls, there was a flourish of red banners and posters depicting Chairman Mao and his deputy, Chu Te. Then came a fanfare of trumpets and tubas. It was all most impressive. So were the troops, who looked positively demonic.

Later, after I had got over a feeling of great uneasiness at the sight of all their red flags (this is, after all, Nature's colour for danger), I noticed that the soldiers were actually in a very poor state: their uniforms were ragged and they all looked undernourished. It was this, together with the grime on their faces from the eternal dust of the Tibetan plains, that gave them their frightening appearance.

Throughout the winter of 1951-2, I continued with my studies much as usual, though more diligently. It was during this period that I began *Lam Rim* meditations. These relate to a text which expounds a stage-by-stage path to enlightenment through mental training. Since around the age of eight, I had begun, in tandem with my monastic education, to receive Tantric teachings such as these. In addition to scriptures, they consisted of secret, oral transmissions handed down by initiates. As the months went by, I began to notice some progress in myself as I laid down the foundations of my own, very slight, spiritual development.

Whilst making my annual retreat, at this time, I heard that Tathag Rinpoché had passed away. I very much wanted to attend his cremation, but could not, so I offered special prayers for him.

My other preoccupation that winter was to do all I could to encourage my Prime Ministers and *Kashag*. I reminded them of the Buddhist doctrine of Impermanence and pointed out that the

present situation could not last for ever, even if it did last for our lifetimes. But privately, I followed events with increasing anxiety. The only happy occasion to look forward to was a visit by the Panchen Lama, who was due to reach Lhasa shortly.

Meanwhile, following the arrival of the last consignment of 20,000 troops, a serious food shortage was developing. The population of Lhasa had almost doubled in a matter of weeks, and it could not be long before our meagre resources gave out. At first the Chinese kept more or less to the provisions of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' which stated that the PLA should 'be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a needle or thread from the people'. They paid for the grain the Government gave them and reimbursed the owners of houses that were requisitioned to quarter their officers.

However, this system of remuneration soon broke down. Money ceased to change hands and the Chinese began to demand food and lodging as of right. Very quickly, a crisis developed. Inflation took off. This was something that had never been experienced before and my people did not understand how the price of grain could double overnight. They were outraged and their previously passive hatred of the invaders turned abruptly to active derision. In the traditional way to drive out evil, they began to clap and spit whenever they saw groups of Chinese soldiers. Children began to throw rocks and stones, and even monks would wind the loose folds of their gowns into a bunch and use it for whipping any soldiers that came near.

At the same time, scurrilous songs were sung about General Chiang Chin-wu that made fun of his gold watch. And when it was discovered that many of his officers wore costly fur linings under their outwardly similar uniforms, Tibetans' contempt knew no bounds. This infuriated the Chinese, mostly I suspect because although they knew they were being laughed at, they could not understand what was being said. This hurt their pride. It was tantamount to losing face, the worst thing that can happen to a Chinese. The eventual result was an extremely amusing incident with General Chiang. One day he came to see me and demanded

that I issue a proclamation banning any criticism of the Chinese, whether in songs or on posters, since these were 'reactionary' activities.

However, despite new laws prohibiting opposition to China, notices began to appear in the streets denouncing the presence of the Chinese. A popular resistance movement was formed. Finally, a six-point memorandum was drawn up and sent directly to General Chiang listing the people's grievances and demanding the removal of the garrison. This infuriated him. He suggested that the document was the work of 'imperialists' and accused the two Prime Ministers of leading a conspiracy. Tension mounted. Thinking that they could bypass Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa, the Chinese began to approach me directly. At first I refused to receive them without the two men being present. But when on one occasion Lobsang Tashi said something that particularly inflamed him, Chiang actually moved as if to strike my Prime Minister. Without thinking, I ran between the two men, yelling at them to stop at once. I was terrified. I had never seen adults behave like that. Thereafter, I consented to see the two factions separately.

The situation between the Chinese leaders and my two Prime Ministers continued to deteriorate as more and more officials and bureaucrats began to arrive from China. These men, far from allowing the Tibetan Government to look after its own affairs, as was stipulated in the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement', interfered incessantly. General Chiang called endless series of meetings between them and the *Kashag*, mainly with a view to discussing the permanent accommodation of these officials, his soldiers and their many thousand camels and other pack animals. Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa found it impossible to make him understand that not only were these demands unreasonable, but they were also not feasible.

When the General asked for a second disbursement of 2,000 tons of barley, they had to explain to him that no such quantity of food existed. Already the Tibetan population of the city lived in fear of scarcity and what little grain remained in the government

warehouses could only feed the army for another two months at most. They told him that there could be no possible reason for wanting to maintain such large forces in Lhasa. If their purpose was to defend the nation, they should be sent to the borders. Only the officials need remain in the capital, with perhaps a regiment or so for an escort. The General took this quietly and answered politely, so they told me, but he did nothing.

After their suggestion that these troops be sent elsewhere, the two Prime Ministers became increasingly unpopular with General Chiang. To begin with he reserved his anger for Lobsang Tashi, the elder of the two, who knew some Chinese. This irritated the General and he was quick to accuse the monk of every imaginable crime, whilst simultaneously praising Lukhangwa, whom he saw as a potential ally.

It turned out, however, Lukhangwa was the man with the greater depth of character, despite his youth, and he never once tried to hide his true feelings from the General. Even on a personal level, he displayed the utmost contempt for the man. On one occasion, I remember being told, Chiang asked him casually how much tea he drank. 'It depends on the quality of the tea,' Lukhangwa replied. I laughed when I heard this, but realised that the situation between the two men must be very bad.

The climax of the drama occurred only a short while later when Chiang convened a meeting with the two Prime Ministers, the *Kashag* and all of his own officials. When it began, he announced that they were gathered to discuss the absorption of the Tibetan army into the PLA. This was too much for Lukhangwa. He said straight away that the idea was unacceptable. No matter that it was one of the provisions of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. Its terms had already been broken so many times by the Chinese that it was a meaningless document. It was unthinkable, he said, that the Tibetan army would switch allegiance to the PLA.

Chiang listened quietly. 'In that case,' he said, 'we shall begin by doing nothing more than replacing the Tibetan flag with the Chinese flag.' 'It will only be pulled down and burned if you do,' replied Lukhangwa. 'And that will be embarrassing for you.' He

went on to say that it was absurd for the Chinese, who had violated the integrity of Tibet, to expect to have friendly relations with Tibetans. 'You have already cracked a man's skull,' he said, 'and that crack has not yet healed. It is too soon to expect him to be your friend.' At this Chiang stormed out of the meeting. There would be another in three days' time.

Naturally I was not present at any of these conferences, but I was kept fully informed of everything that took place. It began to look as if I would be more directly involved very soon if the situation did not improve.

The meeting was convened three days later as planned. This time another general, Fan Ming, presided. He began by saying that he was sure that Lukhangwa wished to make an apology for what he had said last time. Lukhangwa corrected him at once. He had no intention of apologising. He stood by all that he had said, adding that he considered it his absolute duty to keep the Chinese fully informed of the Tibetan point of view. People were very disturbed at the presence of so many Chinese soldiers. Furthermore, they were concerned that Chamdo had not been returned to the administration of the central Government and there were no signs that the PLA elsewhere in Tibet was about to return to China. As far as the proposals concerning the Tibetan army were concerned, there would certainly be trouble if they were accepted.

Fan Ming was outraged. He accused Lukhangwa of being in league with foreign imperialists and said that he would demand that the Dalai Lama have him removed from office. Lukhangwa replied that if the Dalai Lama requested it of him, he would gladly give up not only his office, but also his life. With that, the meeting ended in confusion.

Soon afterwards, I received a written report from the Chinese stating that it was clear that Lukhangwa was an imperialist reactionary who did not want to improve relations between China and Tibet and asking that he be removed from office. I also received a verbal suggestion from the *Kashag* saying that it would probably be for the best if I asked both Prime Ministers to resign. This saddened me greatly. They had both shown such loyalty and

conviction, such honesty and sincerity, such love for the people they served.

When they came to see me to offer their resignations a day or so later, they had tears in their eyes. There were tears in mine too. But I realised that if I did not accept the situation, their lives would be in danger. So, with a heavy heart, I accepted their resignations, conscious only of my concern, if possible, to improve relations with the Chinese, with whom I must now deal directly. For the first time, I understood the true meaning of the word 'bully'.

It was about this time that the Panchen Lama reached Lhasa. Unfortunately for him, he had been raised under the eye of the Chinese and was only now on his way to Tashilhunpo monastery to take up his rightful position there. When he arrived, from Amdo Province, he did so with yet another large detachment of Chinese troops (his 'bodyguard'), along with his family and tutors.

Shortly after his arrival I received the young Panchen Lama at an official meeting followed by a private lunch at the Potala. I remember that he had with him a very pushy Chinese security officer, who tried to barge in on us when we were alone together. My own (ceremonial) bodyguards moved at once to stop this man, with the result that I almost had an ugly incident on my hands: the man was armed.

In the end, I did manage to have some time alone with the Panchen Lama and my impression was of a very honest and faithful young man. Being three years younger than me, and not yet in a position of authority, he retained an air of innocence and struck me as a very happy and pleasant person. I felt quite close to him. It was just as well that neither of us knew what a tragic life he would lead.

Not long after the Panchen Lama's visit, I was invited back to Tathag monastery, where I consecrated, very elaborately and thoroughly, in a ceremony lasting fifteen hours, the *stupa* (memorial) dedicated to my *guru*. I felt quite sad as I prostrated full length in front of it. Afterwards, I went on an excursion into the mountains and surrounding area, relieved to be free from the



Myself as a young child

*My predecessor,
Thupten Gyatso,
the Thirteenth Dalai Lama*



Reting Rinpoche, my first Regent



*Detail of 1,000-armed Chenrezig,
Bodhisattva of Compassion*



*The Potala palace.
The village of Shol is below.*





*My mother.
This photograph was taken
when she was in her sixties.*



Myself as a teenager

*Dromo, at the
ceremony where
I received
the relic*





*Two masked dancers
of the kind that per-
formed each summer
at the opera festival*

*Monks and laymen
attending a religious
ceremony*





(Left) With the Panchen Lama, flanked by Chu Te (left) and Chou En-lai (right), on arrival at Peking railway station, 1954. Phuntsog Wangyal can be seen in the centre of the picture.

(Left below) With my Tutors, the Kashag, my senior attendants and members of my family in Peking. My mother, Tenzin Choegyal and my elder sister, Tsering Dolma, are on the right.

(Right) In Gangtok with Thondup Namgyal, Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim. He shared my interest in photography.

(Below) A rare photograph of my complete family, India 1956/7. Only my father is missing. From left to right: my mother, Tsering Dolma, Gyalo Thondup, Taktser Rinpoche, Lobsang Samten, myself, Jetsun Pema and Tenzin Choegyal.



12 March 1959: the uprising of Tibetan women shown demonstrating in Shol below the Potala.



Escape into exile



pressures of our unhappy situation. One interesting aspect of this visit was being shown a piece of Tathag Rinpoché's skull that had survived the flames of his cremation. On it could clearly be seen an imprint of the Tibetan character that corresponded to his protector divinity. Actually, this mysterious phenomenon is quite common amongst high lamas. The bones melt in such a way as to reveal characters, or sometimes images. In other cases, such as that of my predecessor, those imprints can actually be observed on the body itself.

After the forced resignations of Lukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi in early spring, 1952, there followed a period of uneasy truce with the Chinese authorities. I used this as an opportunity to establish the Reform Committee that I had had in mind since the journey to Dromo more than a year before. One of my main ambitions was to establish an independent judiciary.

As I have mentioned in the case of Reting Rinpoché, I was impotent as a minor to help people when they fell foul of the Government, though I should often have liked to. For example, I remember with sadness the case of a man who worked in the administration, discovered to have been hoarding gold-dust which was intended for use in making *thangkas*. I watched him through my telescope having his hands bound and then being set on a mule facing backwards and banished from the city. This was the traditional punishment for such crimes.

Sometimes I feel that I could have intervened more often. There was another similar incident that I witnessed at the Potala. From very early on I had identified several places where it was possible, by peeping through windows or skylights, to observe what was going on in rooms that I would not otherwise have seen inside. On one occasion, I saw by this means a hearing of the Regent's Secretariat which had met to consider the grievance of a certain tenant against his landlord. I clearly remember how miserable this poor man looked. He was quite elderly, short and bent, with grey hair and a thin moustache. Unluckily for him, his master's family was friendly with the Regent's (at the time still Reting Rinpoché) and his case was dismissed. My heart went out to him, but there

was nothing I could do. So now, as I heard of similar cases of injustice, I became ever more convinced of the need for judicial reform.

I also wanted to do something about education. At the time, there was still no system of universal education. There were only a few schools in Lhasa and a tiny handful in rural areas, but for the most part the monasteries were the only centres of learning, and the education they provided was open only to the monastic community. Accordingly, I instructed the *Kashag* to put forward proposals for the development of a good educational programme.

Another area which I felt was in urgent need of reform was communications. In those days, there was not a single road in all Tibet and almost the only wheeled vehicles were the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's three cars. It was easy to see that many people would benefit enormously from a system of roads and transportation. But, like education, this was a long-term consideration and I realised that it would be many years before there could be progress here.

However, there were things that could be done which would bring immediate positive results. One was the abolition of inheritable debt. This, I had gathered both from my sweepers and from my talks en route to Dromo, was the scourge of the peasant and rural community in Tibet. It meant that debt owing to a landlord by his tenants, perhaps acquired as a result of successive bad harvests, could be transferred from one generation to the next. As a result, many families were not able to make a decent living for themselves, let alone hope one day to be free. Almost as pernicious was the system whereby small landowners could borrow from the Government in times of need. Here too the debt was inheritable. So I decided firstly to abolish the principle of hereditary debt and secondly to write off all government loans that could not be repaid.

Knowing that these reforms might not be very popular with the nobility and people with vested interests, I persuaded the Lord Chamberlain to issue these decrees publicly, not in the usual way by putting up posters in public places. Instead, I had them

distributed on paper that was printed on wooden blocks similar to those used for printing scripture. That way, there was a better chance the information would be widely disseminated. Anyone who might otherwise have tried to interfere would with any luck not have their suspicions raised until it was too late.

The terms of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' made it clear that 'the Local Government of Tibet shall carry out reforms of its own accord' and that these would not be subject to 'compulsion on the part of the authorities [i.e. the Chinese]'. However, although these early attempts at land reform brought immediate benefit to many thousands of my people, it soon became clear that our liberators had an altogether different approach to the organisation of agriculture. Already, collectivisation had begun in Amdo. Eventually, it was introduced throughout Tibet and was directly responsible for widespread famine and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans from starvation. And although the authorities relented following the Cultural Revolution, the effects of collectivised farming are felt to this day. Many visitors to Tibet have commented on how small and underdeveloped the people in rural areas look, due to malnutrition. But all this lay in the future. In the meantime, I urged the Government to do all it could to rout out old and unproductive practices. I was determined to do all I could to propel Tibet into the twentieth century.

During the summer of 1953, so far as I can remember, I received the *Kalachakra* initiation from Ling Rinpoché. This is one of the most important initiations in the Tantric tradition, with special significance for world peace. And, unlike other Tantric rites, it is given before large public audiences. It is also very elaborate and takes a week to ten days to prepare, as well as three days actually to perform. One of its features is the construction, using individual grains of coloured sand, of a large *mandala*, a representation in two dimensions of a three-dimensional symbol. The first time I ever saw one of these *mandalas*, I almost lost my balance from just looking at it, so extraordinarily beautiful did it appear.

The initiation itself followed a month-long retreat. I recall it as

a very moving experience that affected both Ling Rinpoché and myself. I felt extremely privileged to be participating in a tradition performed over countless generations by successions of highly realised spiritual masters. Whilst chanting the last verse of the dedication prayer, I was so moved that I choked with emotion, a fact that subsequently I came to regard as having been auspicious, though I thought nothing of it at the time. I now see it as being premonitory of my being able to give many more *Kalachakra* initiations than any of my predecessors, and in all parts of the world. This, despite my being by no means the most qualified to do so.

The following year, during *Monlam*, I received full ordination as a Buddhist *bikshu* in front of the statue of Chenrezig in the Jokhang temple. Again this was a very moving occasion, with Ling Rinpoché officiating. Then, that summer, at the request of a group of lay women, I performed the *Kalachakra* initiation ceremony for the first time during this lifetime.

I was very glad of this period of fragile rapprochement with the Chinese authorities. I used it to concentrate on my religious duties and began to give regular teachings, to both small and large groups. As a result, I began to build up a personal relationship with my people. And although at first I was somewhat anxious to be addressing public audiences, my self-confidence rapidly increased. I was aware, however, that outside Lhasa the Chinese were making life very hard for my people. At the same time, I could see for myself why my two Prime Ministers had been so scornful of the Chinese. For example, whenever General Chiang Chin-wu came to see me, he posted bodyguards outside the room – even though he must have known that sanctity of life is one of the cardinal rules of Buddhism.

Still, I took note of the Buddha's teaching that in one sense a supposed enemy is more valuable than a friend, for an enemy teaches you things, such as forbearance, that a friend generally does not. To this I added my firm belief that no matter how bad things become, they will eventually get better. In the end, the

innate desire of all people for truth, justice and human understanding must triumph over ignorance and despair. So if the Chinese oppressed us, it could only strengthen us.

In Communist China

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ABOUT A YEAR after the departure from office of Lobsang Tashi and Lukhangwa, the Chinese suggested that the Government send some officials to China, to see for themselves how marvellous life was in the Glorious Motherland. A party was duly assembled and taken on a tour of the People's Republic. When they came back after many months, they submitted a report which was full of praise and admiration and lies. I realised at once that this document had been written under supervision, as by now I was used to the fact that it was often impossible to speak the truth in front of our new masters. I too had had to learn a similar form of communication: how to put on false appearances when dealing with the Chinese under difficult circumstances.

Not long after, in early 1954, I myself was invited to go to China. This seemed like an excellent idea. Not only would it enable me to meet with Chairman Mao in person, but also it would give me the opportunity to see something of the outside world. But few other Tibetans were happy with the idea. They were afraid that I might be kept in Peking and not allowed to return – some even felt that my life could be in danger and many did their best to dissuade me from going. I had no fear for myself, however, and I made up my mind to go no matter what anyone told me. Had I not been so decisive, I doubt whether the proposal would have come to anything.

In the end I set out, together with a retinue which included my family, my two tutors, my two *tsenshap* (a new one having been appointed after Trijang Rinpoché became Junior Tutor), the *Kashag* and a great many other officials. In all we numbered

about five hundred. When we departed one morning during high summer, a formal farewell was held on the bank of the Kyichu river, with musical bands and a parade of officials. Tens of thousands of people attended, many carrying religious banners and burning incense to wish me a safe journey and a happy return.

In those days, there was still no bridge over the Kyichu and we crossed in animal-skin coracles, to the accompaniment of chanting by Namgyal monks positioned on the other side. As I climbed aboard my own special vessel, which consisted of two of these coracles strapped together, and turned to wave goodbye to my people, I could see that they were in a highly emotional state. Many were crying and it looked as if some were on the point of throwing themselves into the water, convinced that they were seeing me for the last time. I myself felt a mixture of sadness and excitement, just as I had on leaving for Dromo four years previously. It was heartbreaking to see my people so distraught. At the same time, the prospect of the adventure that lay ahead was very thrilling to a young man of nineteen.

The distance from Lhasa to Peking is approaching two thousand miles. In 1954, there were still no roads connecting the two countries, although the Chinese had begun work on one called the Qinghai highway, using Tibetan forced labour. The first part was complete, which enabled me to travel a short way in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's Dodge car. It too had been transported across the river.

My first stop was at Ganden monastery, about thirty-five miles from Lhasa, where I took the opportunity to remain for a few days. This was another moving experience for me. Ganden is the third of Tibet's great university monasteries. When I left to continue my journey to China, I noticed something very strange. A statue of one of the protector divinities of Tibet, which is represented as having a buffalo's head, had clearly moved. When I had first seen it, it was looking down with a rather subdued look on its face. Now, it was facing East, with a very ferocious expression. (Similarly, I heard that at the time of my escape into exile, the walls of one chapel at Ganden ran with blood.)

I resumed my journey by car. But it was not long before I had to exchange this stately form of transport for a mule: the road had been washed away as soon as we reached the Kongpo region, and many bridges were down. The going quickly became very dangerous. There was constant flooding from mountain streams carrying melted snow and there were frequent landslides. Rocks and boulders often came thundering down amongst us. Being late summer, there was some heavy rainfall and there were long stretches when the mud came halfway to a person's knees. I felt very sorry for the older people, who sometimes struggled to keep up.

Altogether conditions were very bad. Our Tibetan guides tried very hard to persuade the Chinese who escorted us to alter course so that we followed the traditional high-altitude routes rather than the projected course of the road, which they thought was unsuitable. But the Chinese insisted, saying that if we went that way there would be no facilities. So we went on. It is something of a miracle that more than three people were not killed. Those that died were innocent, young Chinese soldiers from among those made to stand joined together along the side of the track to shield us from avalanches. I felt so sorry for these people. They had no choice. Several mules also fell over a precipice, bursting their guts.

Then one evening, General Chiang Chin-wu, who was also present, came to my tent and explained that the going tomorrow would be even worse. We would have to dismount and walk. Therefore, in his capacity as representative of the Central People's Government, he would personally link arms and escort me along the way. As he said this, it occurred to me that the General was under the impression that not only could he exert his power over my two Prime Ministers, but he could also bully Nature.

I duly spent the next day entwined with Chiang. He was much older than me and very unfit, so it was quite a tiresome arrangement. Moreover, I was concerned that the rocks which continually crashed on to the road from above might not be able to discriminate between us in the event that the General's time had come!

Throughout the journey, each time we stopped, we did so at military outposts manned by the PLA and bedecked with red flags. Chinese soldiers would then come over and offer us tea. On one occasion, I was so thirsty that I accepted some without bothering to find my own drinking vessel. After I had quenched my thirst, I noticed that the mug I was drinking from was disgustingly dirty with scraps of food and dried saliva on the sides. This rather revolted me. I remembered how particular I had been as a small child, though now, whenever I think of the incident, I cannot help laughing.

After about two weeks we reached a small town called Demo, where we camped by a stream for the night. The weather was perfect and I remember being enchanted at the sight of the river-banks, which were adrift with yellow buttercups and mauve-pink primulas. Ten days later we reached the Poyul region. From now on the road was motorable and the party travelled by jeep and truck. This was a great relief as I had begun to be very sore from riding, though I was not the only one. I shall never forget the sight of one of my officials. His backside was so painful that he rode sitting diagonally across his saddle. In this way, he contrived to rest first one cheek and then the other.

At this distance from Lhasa, the Chinese were in much more effective control of the country. Already they had built many barracks for their soldiers and houses for their officials. And in every town and village there were loudspeakers which played Chinese martial music and exhortations to the people to work and work harder 'for the glory of the Motherland'.

Soon, we reached Chamdo, the capital of Kham, where a large reception awaited me. Here, because the Chinese administered the place directly, the proceedings had a very curious flavour. Military bands played hymns of praise to Chairman Mao and to the Revolution and Tibetans stood waving red flags.

From Chamdo, I was taken by jeep to Chengdu, the first town in China proper. On the way, we crossed the hill at a place called Dhar Tse-dho, which marks the historic border between Tibet and China. As we descended to the plains on the other side, I

remarked to myself how different the countryside was. Might the Chinese people prove to be as different from my own people as their countryside was from ours?

I did not see much of Chengdu as I caught a fever on arrival and was confined to my bed for several days. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I and the most senior members of my entourage were taken to Shingang, where I was joined by the Panchen Lama, who had set off from Shigatse some months before. We were then flown to Xian.

The craft in which we flew was very old and even I could tell that it had seen better days. Inside, the seats were very uncomfortable steel frames without any sort of upholstery. But I was so excited at the prospect of getting airborne that I was able to overlook the obvious defects and felt no fear at all, although since then I have developed a much more cautious attitude to flying. Nowadays I don't like it much and am a rather poor seat companion. I much prefer saying prayers to holding conversations.

In Xian, we changed forms of transport again and completed the last leg of the journey by train. This was another wonderful experience. The carriages reserved for the Panchen Lama and myself were equipped with every facility imaginable, from beds and bathrooms to an elaborate dining-car. The only thing that marred the journey for me was a growing sense of apprehension the closer we drew to the Chinese capital. When at last we arrived at Peking railway station, I felt extremely nervous, though this abated a little when I saw huge crowds of young people gathered to welcome us. But it did not take long for me to realise that their smiles and cheers were entirely false, and that they were acting under orders, whereupon my anxiety returned:

As we stepped off the train, we were greeted by Chou En-lai, the Prime Minister, and Chu Te, Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic, both of whom seemed quite friendly. With them was the same middle-aged Tibetan I had seen with General Tan Kuan-sen at Lhasa. After courtesies had been exchanged, this man, whose name was Phuntsog Wangyal, accompanied me to my quarters, which was a bungalow with a beautiful garden that had

previously belonged to the Japanese diplomatic mission, where he explained the agenda for the next few days.

In due course I became firm friends with Phuntsog Wangyal. He had been converted to the Communist cause many years back. Before coming to China, he had acted as an agent for the Communists whilst teaching at a school run by the Chinese Mission in Lhasa. When the Mission was closed down following the expulsion of its members in 1949, he and his wife, who happened to be a Tibetan Muslim, left too. He himself was from Kham. As a child he had attended a Christian Missionary School at Bathang, his home town, where he learned some English. By the time of our acquaintance he had acquired an excellent command of Chinese too and made a brilliant interpreter between Chairman Mao and myself.

Phuntsog Wangyal turned out to be a very able man, calm and wise; a good thinker too. He was also very sincere and honest, and I enjoyed his company a great deal. Evidently, he felt very happy in his assignment as my official interpreter, not least because of the access it gave him to Chairman Mao, whom he idolized. However, his feelings towards me were equally strong. Once, when we were talking about Tibet, he said that he was full of optimism for the future as he considered that I was very open-minded. He told me how many years ago he had been to a public audience at the Norbulingka and seen a small boy on a throne. 'And now you are a small boy no longer, here with me in Peking.' This thought moved him very much and he wept openly. After several minutes he continued, now speaking as a true Communist. He told me that the Dalai Lama should not rely on astrology as a tool with which to govern the country. He also said that religion was not a reliable thing to base one's life on. Because of his obvious sincerity, I listened carefully. On the subject of what he called superstitious practices, I explained the Buddha's own emphasis on the need for thorough investigation before accepting something as true or false. I also told him that I was convinced that religion is essential, especially for those engaged in politics. At the end of our conversation I felt that we had a high regard for

one another. Such differences as we had were personal matters, so there was no basis for conflict. In the final analysis, we were both Tibetans thinking deeply about the future of our country.

A day or two after our arrival, I was told that all members of the Tibetan delegation were invited to a banquet. That afternoon we were taken through a dress rehearsal of the evening's activities. It turned out that our hosts were very particular about protocol (which I later discovered to be a general characteristic of officials of the People's Republic) and our liaison officers worked themselves up into a frantic pitch of anxiety. They were terrified that we would bungle the affair and make them look foolish, so they gave us all strict and detailed instructions about what to do, even down to the number of paces to take and after how many to turn left or right. It was like a military parade. There was a precise order in which everyone was to appear. I was to go in first, followed by the Panchen Lama, then my two Tutors, the *Kalons* (the four members of the *Kashag*), each in order of seniority, and then everyone else, according to rank. All of us were to bear gifts and again these had to match the status of the person carrying them. The whole procedure seemed very complicated, even to us Tibetans whose aristocracy is also known for its love of etiquette. But the trepidation of our hosts was infectious and soon we were all in a dither, save for Ling Rinpoché, who disliked all formality. He would have nothing to do with it.

Next day, so far as I can remember, I had my inaugural encounter with Chairman Mao. This was at a public meeting, with a format similar to the banquet, all of us filing in according to rank. As we entered the hall, the first thing I noticed was an array of spotlights that had been erected for a whole army of official photographers. Beneath these stood Mao himself, looking very calm and relaxed. He did not have the aura of a particularly intelligent man. However, as we shook hands I felt as if I was in the presence of a strong magnetic force. He came across as being very friendly and spontaneous, despite the formality of the occasion. It began to look as if the apprehension I had felt was unfounded.

In all, I had at least a dozen meetings with Mao, most of which

were at large gatherings, but a few of which were held in private with no one but Phuntsog Wangyal in attendance. Whatever the occasion, whether it was a banquet or a conference, he always made me sit next to him and on one occasion he even served me my food. This worried me somewhat as I had heard a rumour that he was suffering from tuberculosis.

I found him a most impressive man. Physically he was extraordinary. His complexion was very dark, but at the same time his skin seemed shiny. It was as if he used some kind of ointment; his hands were very beautiful with perfect fingers and an exquisitely formed thumb, which had the same curious sheen as well.

I also noticed that he did seem to have some difficulty with breathing and he panted a great deal. This may have had an effect on his speech, which was always very slow and precise. He was given to using short sentences, perhaps for the same reason. His movements and mannerisms were similarly slow. If he moved his head from left to right it would take several seconds, which gave him an air of dignity and assurance.

In contrast to the distinction of his manner were his clothes, which looked completely worn out. His shirts were always threadbare at the cuff and the jackets he wore were shabby. These were identical to those worn by everyone else, save for the colour, which was a slightly different shade of drab. The only part of his attire that looked well kept were his shoes, which were always well polished. But he did not need luxurious clothes. In spite of looking down-at-heel, he had a very emphatic air of authority and sincerity. His mere presence commanded respect. I felt, too, that he was completely genuine as well as very decisive.

During the first few weeks of our stay in China, the main topic of conversation amongst all of us Tibetans was naturally how we could best reconcile our needs with China's desires. I myself acted as mediator between the *Kashag* and the Communist leadership. There were several preliminary meetings, which went very well. The discussions were given further impetus when I had my first private meeting with Mao. During the course of it, he told me that he had come to the conclusion that it was too early to

implement all of the clauses of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. One of them in particular he felt could safely be ignored for the time being. This was the one that concerned the establishment of a Military Affairs Commission in Tibet whereby the country would be governed effectively by the PLA. 'It would be better to establish a Preparatory Committee for the "Autonomous Region" of Tibet,' he said. This organisation would see to it that the pace of reform was dictated by the wishes of the Tibetan people themselves. He was most insistent that the terms of the 'Agreement' were put into effect as slowly as we ourselves judged necessary. When I reported this news back to the *Kashag*, they were highly relieved. It really began to look as if we might be able to achieve a workable compromise now that we were dealing directly with the highest in the land.

At a later private meeting with Mao, he told me how glad he was that I had come to Peking. He went on to say that the whole purpose of China's presence in Tibet was to help us. 'Tibet is a great country,' he said. 'You have a marvellous history. Long ago you even conquered a lot of China. But now you have fallen behind and we want to help you. In twenty years' time you could be ahead of us and then it will be your turn to help China.' I could hardly believe my ears, but he seemed to be speaking out of conviction and not just for effect.

I began to get very enthusiastic about the possibilities of association with the People's Republic of China. The more I looked at Marxism, the more I liked it. Here was a system based on equality and justice for everyone, which claimed to be a panacea for all the world's ills. From a theoretical standpoint, its only drawback as far as I could see was its insistence on a purely materialistic view of human existence. This I could not agree with. I was also concerned at the methods used by the Chinese in pursuit of their ideals. I received a strong impression of rigidity. But I expressed a wish to become a Party member all the same. I felt sure, as I still do, that it would be possible to work out a synthesis of Buddhist and pure Marxist doctrines that really would prove to be an effective way of conducting politics.

At the same time I started to learn Chinese and also at the suggestion of my new Chinese security officer – a delightful man and a veteran of the Korean War – began to do some physical exercises. He used to come and supervise me every morning. However, he was not at all used to getting up early and could not understand why I rose before five o'clock to pray. Often he would appear tousle-haired and unwashed. As for the regime, it did seem to have some effect. My chest, which up until then had been rather boney and narrow, began to flatten out considerably.

In all, I spent around ten weeks in Peking after our arrival. Much of the time was taken up by attending political meetings and conferences, not to mention innumerable banquets. The food at these enormous meals I found to be quite good on the whole, although I still shudder at the thought of the hundred-year-old eggs which are considered to be such a delicacy. Their smell was overpowering. It lingered too, so that when you had done with eating them you could not tell whether you were still tasting them in your mouth or whether it was simply the smell: they completely overwhelmed your senses. Some European cheeses have a similar effect, I have noticed. These banquets were considered to be very important by our hosts, who seemed to be of the opinion that genuine friendships could develop just by people sitting together at the dining-table. This is quite wrong, of course.

When the First Assembly of the Communist Party took place at around this time, I was made a Vice-President of the Steering Committee of the People's Republic of China. This was a nominal appointment that carried some prestige, if not actually any political power. (The Steering Committee discussed policy before it was put up to the Politburo, where the real power lay.)

The political meetings and conferences of the Steering Committee were a much more useful experience than the banquets, although they tended to go on for ever. Sometimes the speaker would talk for five, six or even seven hours at a stretch, which was extremely boring. I spent the time sipping hot water and yearning for the end. However, the meetings that were attended by Mao were a different matter. He was spellbinding. Best of all, when he

had done with speaking, he would canvass his audience for their opinions. He was always trying to sound out people's deepest feelings on any given matter and was open to anything that might be said. He even went so far as to criticise himself on a number of occasions and once, when he was not getting the results he wanted, he produced a letter that had been sent to him from his own village complaining about the behaviour of the local Party authorities. This was altogether impressive but as time went on I began to realise how artificial the majority of these meetings were. People were afraid to speak their minds, especially the non-Party members, who were always desperate to please the Party members and be polite to them.

Gradually, it began to dawn on me that political life in China was full of contradictions, although I could not exactly decide on what was the cause of this. Every time I saw Mao, he inspired me again. I remember one occasion when he presented himself without warning at my residence. He wanted to speak to me privately on some matter, I forget what exactly, but during the course of our conversation he surprised me very much by speaking favourably of the Lord Buddha. He praised him for being 'anti-caste, anti-corruption and anti-exploitation'. He also mentioned the goddess Tara, a well-known female Buddha. Suddenly he seemed quite pro-religion.

On another occasion I sat facing the Great Helmsman, as he was known, at a long table, at either end of which were two generals. He pointed both men out to me, saying that he was posting them to Tibet. Then he looked at me hard and said, 'I am sending these men to serve you. If they don't listen to what you tell them, you are to let me know and I shall recall them.' Yet at the same time as receiving these favourable impressions, I could see for myself the paranoia with which the great majority of Party officials went about their daily tasks. They were in constant fear of their jobs, if not their lives.

As well as spending time with Mao, I saw quite a lot of Chou En-lai and Lu Rau-chi as well. The latter was a man of few words and little laughter. In short, he was very tough. On one occasion

I was present at a meeting between Lu and U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma. Before it began, each person present was briefed on the subject they were to take care of. Mine was religion: if the Burmese leader wanted to talk about religion, I was to answer. This seemed unlikely and was, in fact, very far from what U Nu had in mind. Instead, he wanted to ask Lu about China's support for Communist insurgents in his country. But when he spoke, adding that the guerrillas were creating trouble for his Government, Lu simply looked away. He refused to be drawn and U Nu's question went unanswered. I was shocked, but consoled myself with the thought that at least Lu did not lie or attempt deceit. Chou En-lai would undoubtedly have said something clever at this point.

Chou was a very different sort of person and, where Lu was steady and rather grave, he was full of smiles and charm and swift intelligence. In fact he was over-polite, which is invariably a sign of someone not to be trusted. He was also very sharp-eyed. I remember that at one particular banquet I attended, he was escorting some foreign dignitary to the table when suddenly his guest tripped on a small stair. Chou had a dysfunctional arm but, as the man stumbled, his good one was already out, waiting to catch him. He did not even stop chatting.

His tongue was sharp too. After U Nu's visit to Peking, Chou addressed a meeting of over a thousand officials, during which he openly made derogatory remarks about the Burmese Prime Minister. I found this very strange as publicly he had always been exceedingly polite and courteous to the man.

Whilst in Peking I was asked to give teachings to some Chinese Buddhists. My translator on this occasion was a Chinese monk who, I was told, had studied in Tibet and received teachings from a Tibetan lama. (In former times, many Chinese monks had been to study in Tibet, particularly in the field of dialectics.) I was highly impressed by him: he struck me as being a very devoted and sincere practitioner of his faith.

Some of the Communists I met were also extremely nice people, totally selfless in their service to others and, personally, very

helpful to me. I learned a great deal from them. One such was a high official at the Office of Minorities, called Liu Ka-ping, who was appointed to give me lessons on Marxism and the Chinese Revolution. He was, in fact, a Muslim and I used to tease him by asking him whether he ever ate pork. He also had one finger missing, I remember, and was a delightful person. We became very good friends. His wife, who was so much younger than him that she could have been his daughter, became equally good friends with my mother and elder sister. When I came to leave China, he cried like a child.

I remained in Peking until after the October celebrations. That year marked the fifth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic and a number of foreign dignitaries were expected in the capital at that time. Amongst these were Khrushchev and Bulganin, both of whom I was introduced to. Neither man made much of an impression on me, certainly nothing compared with Pandit Nehru, who also visited Peking whilst I was there. He was guest of honour at a banquet presided over by Chou En-lai and, as usual, all the other guests filed past him to be introduced. From a distance he seemed very affable and had no trouble finding a few words for everyone as they came to him. However, when it was my turn and I stood shaking him by the hand, he seemed to get stuck. His eyes remained fixed in front of him and he was completely speechless. I felt rather embarrassed at this and broke the ice by saying how pleased I was to meet him and that I had heard a great deal about him, despite Tibet being such a remote country. At last he spoke, but only in the most perfunctory manner.

I was very disappointed, as I had particularly wanted to be able to speak with him and ask him about his country's attitude to Tibet. It was altogether a very odd meeting.

Later on I did get to talk to the Indian Ambassador, at his request, but this was almost as much of a failure as my meeting with Nehru. Although I had with me an official who spoke excellent English, the Chinese insisted that I take along with me one of their interpreters instead. This meant that what the Indian Ambassador

said in English had to be laboriously translated into Chinese and then into Tibetan. It was a very uncomfortable session. There were certain things that I had wanted to discuss that no longer could be brought up on account of the Chinese presence. Much the best part of the afternoon came when a servant started to pour tea for us all and knocked over a large bowl of exotic fruits that must have been procured at great expense. At the sight of all these apricots, peaches and plums rolling about on the floor, my very grave Chinese interpreter and his assistant (no official ever went alone) got down on their hands and knees and started crawling about on the carpet to pick them up. It was all I could do to stop myself laughing.

I had a much better time with the Russian Ambassador, whom I sat next to at a banquet. In those days, Russia and China were firm friends so there was no danger of interference here. The Ambassador was very amicable and showed some interest in finding out my impressions of Socialism. When I replied that I saw great possibilities in it, he said that I ought to come and visit the Soviet Union. This sounded an excellent idea and I immediately developed a strong desire to undertake a trip to his country – preferably as an ordinary member of a delegation. That way, wherever this imaginary delegation went I would go too, but, not having any responsibilities, I could spend the whole time minding my own business and just looking around. Sadly the idea came to nothing. It was over twenty years before I was able to realise my ambition of visiting the USSR. And, needless to say, the circumstances were very different from those I had fondly imagined.

On the whole the Chinese authorities were very reluctant to let me meet with foreigners. I suppose that I must have been something of an embarrassment to them. At the time of Tibet's invasion there had been widespread condemnation of the Communists from many countries around the world. This was a source of irritation to them and they were busy doing all they could to improve their image and show how their occupation of Tibet was justifiable both historically and in terms of a great nation helping

a weaker one. But I could not help noticing how completely differently our hosts behaved when foreign visitors were present. Whereas habitually they were arrogant in their attitude towards foreigners, in their presence they were very meek and subdued.

Quite a few visitors to Peking expressed an interest to meet me, however, including a Hungarian dance troupe, whose members all wanted my autograph – which I gave them. Also, several thousand Mongolians came to the Chinese capital hoping to see me and the Panchen Lama. This did not please the Chinese authorities, perhaps because the notion of Tibetans and Mongolians together was an uncomfortable reminder of how different things had been in the past. Not only had Tibetan forces extracted tribute from the Chinese in the eighth century, but Mongolia had actually ruled China from 1279 until 1368 AD, following the successful invasion of Kublai Khan, the Mongolian warlord.

At this time, there was an interesting historical incident. Kublai Khan became a Buddhist and had a Tibetan *guru*. This lama persuaded the Mongolian leader to stop his practice of controlling the Chinese population increase by drowning thousands of them in the sea. In so doing, the Tibetan saved many Chinese lives.

During the winter of 1954 I went on an extensive tour of China, together with my complete entourage, including both my mother and Tenzin Choegyal, my youngest brother, to see the marvels of industrial and material progress. I enjoyed this a great deal, but many of my Tibetan officials were completely uninterested in what was on offer and would heave a sigh of relief whenever it was announced that there was to be no 'sightseeing' on that particular day. My mother, especially, did not enjoy her time in China. Her unhappiness increased when, during an excursion, she contracted a fever which developed into quite a serious case of flu. Luckily my personal physician, the 'fat doctor' of my childhood, was with us. He was a very learned man and a great friend of my mother's. He duly prescribed some medicine for her which she took at once. Unfortunately, she misunderstood his directions and took in one go what should have been two separate daily draughts.

This produced a strong reaction, which, on top of her fever, made her very ill indeed. For several days she was extremely weak and I became concerned for her. But after a week she began to recover and, in fact, went on to live for more than twenty-five years. Ling Rinpoché also fell severely ill, but he did not make such a good recovery and it was not until after coming into exile that he fully regained his strength.

Tenzin Choegyal, who is twelve years my junior, was a constant source of delight and terror to everyone, including the Chinese, who were very fond of him. Being extremely intelligent, he picked up fluent Mandarin in a matter of months, which was both an advantage and a disadvantage. He loved to see the grown-ups embarrassed. If ever my mother or anyone made a disparaging remark about one of our hosts, my little brother would pass it on without hesitation. We all had to be very careful of what we said in front of him. Even then, he could always sense when someone was being vague or evasive. But he was so delightful that Trijang Rinpoché, my Junior Tutor, was the only person who succeeded in being reserved towards him, mainly I think because Tenzin Choegyal used to jump all over the furniture and he was worried about having to explain to the Chinese how it came to be broken. Ling Rinpoché was, on the other hand, an enthusiastic playmate for him. Personally I did not see a great deal of my brother, although recently he reminded me of an occasion when I found that he had fished all the carp out of an ornamental pond and laid them out neatly on the grass beside it. He tells me that I boxed his ears hard.

Although my interest in China's material development was not shared by many of my officials, I was much impressed with what the Communists had managed to achieve in the field of heavy industry. I was eager for my own country to make similar progress. I was particularly taken with a hydro-electric power station that we were taken to see in Manchuria. It did not take much imagination to see that there were endless possibilities for this type of power generation in Tibet. But what made this particular trip so memorable was the expression on the face of the official who was

showing me over the project when I asked him some pertinent questions about electrical power. Thanks to my work on that old diesel generator in Lhasa, I had quite a good grasp of the basic principles involved. I suppose it must have seemed very incongruous for a young foreigner in monk's robes to be asking about kilowatt hours and turbine size.

The highlight of this excursion came when I was taken on board an old warship, also in Manchuria. I was fascinated. No matter that it was so ancient and that I could not make head or tail of any of the instruments or dials. Just to be on board this giant, grey, metal structure with its peculiar smell of oil and sea water was enough for me.

On the negative side, I came to realise that the Chinese authorities had no intention of allowing me contact with ordinary Chinese people. Every time I wanted to break away from the programme or even just get out to see places for myself, I was prevented from doing so by the officials sent to look after me, always on the pretext of 'security, security': my safety was their perpetual excuse. Yet it was not only I who was kept isolated from the common people; so were all the Chinese from Peking. They too were forbidden to do anything independently.

However, Serkon Rinpoché, one of my *tsenshap*, always managed to get out and about. He never listened to anything the Chinese said to him and simply did what he thought was proper. And, perhaps because he was lame and quite inconspicuous, no one thought to try to stop him. He was thus the only one who managed to get an intimate picture of what life was like in the brave, new People's Republic. I learned a good deal from him. He painted a very sombre picture of great poverty and fear amongst the population.

I did, however, have one very interesting conversation with a hotel porter whilst visiting an industrial zone. He told me that he had seen photographs of my departure from Lhasa and was pleased to know that my people had been so happy about my visit to China. When I told him that this was far from being the case, he was surprised. 'But it said so in the newspaper,' he said, to which

I replied that the situation must have been misrepresented as the truth was that the majority of my people had been utterly distraught. At this, my friend expressed shock and amazement. I, for my part, realised for the first time to what extent things were distorted in the Communist press: it seemed as if telling lies was in the blood of the authorities.

Whilst on this journey around China, I went over the border into Mongolia, where I travelled with Serkon Rinpoché to his birthplace. It was a very moving experience, which made me realise how closely related is that country to my own.

We arrived back in Peking in late January 1955, just in time to celebrate *Losar*, the Tibetan New Year. As a mark of its importance, I decided to host a banquet, to which I would invite Chairman Mao and the other members of the 'Big Four', that is, Chou En-lai, Chu Te and Lu Rau-chi. They all accepted. During the course of the evening Mao was very friendly. At one point he leaned over and asked me what I was doing as I threw a pinch of *tsampa* up into the air. I explained that this was a symbolic offering, whereupon he took some between his own fingers and did the same. Then he took another lot and, with a mischievous look on his face, threw it on to the floor.

This slightly sarcastic gesture was the only thing that spoiled an otherwise memorable evening, which seemed to hold out a promise of genuine fraternity between our two countries. Certainly that was how the Chinese portrayed the event. To this end they had organised the usual battery of photographers, who were to record the scene for posterity. Some of the photographs were published in the newspaper a day or two later with glowing reports, emphasising the speeches that were made. These pictures must also have been syndicated to Tibet because, when I was back in Lhasa, I saw one of them reproduced in a Chinese-run local newspaper. It depicted Chairman Mao and myself sitting together with my head turned towards him and my hands making some inexplicable gesture. The Tibetan picture editor of the newspaper had made up his own mind about what was going on and ran a caption to the effect that this was a photograph of His Holiness

the Dalai Lama explaining to the Great Helmsman how to make *khahse* (*Losar* cookies)!

The day before I was due to leave China to return to Tibet, that is during the spring of 1955, I was attending a meeting of the Steering Committee. Lu Rau-chi, who was presiding over it, was halfway through an oration when suddenly my security officer burst in and came running over to me. 'Chairman Mao wants to see you at once. He is waiting for you,' he said. I did not know what to say. I couldn't just get up and leave the meeting, and Lu showed no sign of drawing breath. 'In that case,' I replied, 'you will have to go and have me excused.' This he did straight away.

We went directly to Mao's office, where he was indeed waiting for me. It was to be our last meeting. He announced that he wanted to give me some advice about government before I went back to Tibet, and proceeded to explain how to organise meetings, how to draw out people's opinions and then how to decide on the key issues. It was all excellent information and I sat busily taking notes, as I always did whenever we met. He went on to tell me that communications were a vital ingredient in any form of material progress and stressed the importance of seeing to it that as many young Tibetans as possible were trained up in this field. He added that whenever he passed anything on to me, he wanted to be able to do so through a Tibetan. Finally, he drew closer to me and said, 'Your attitude is good, you know. Religion is poison. Firstly it reduces the population, because monks and nuns must stay celibate, and secondly it neglects material progress.' At this I felt a violent burning sensation all over my face and I was suddenly very afraid. 'So,' I thought, 'you are the destroyer of the *Dharma* after all.'

It was by now late in the evening. As Mao spoke those fateful words I leaned forward as if to write something, half hiding my face. I hoped that he would not sense the horror I felt: it might have broken his trust in me. Luckily, Phuntsog Wangyal was not, for some reason, interpreting between us on this occasion. Had he done so, I am sure that he would have discovered my thoughts

— especially as we invariably discussed everything together afterwards.

Even so, I could not have concealed my feelings for much longer. Fortunately, Mao ended the interview after only a few more minutes. I felt a tremendous sense of relief when he stood up to shake my hand. Amazingly, his eyes were full of life and he was completely alert, despite the late hour. We went outside together, into the night-time quiet. My car was waiting. He opened and closed the door for me. As the vehicle began to move I turned to wave. My last sight of Mao was of him standing out in the cold with neither hat nor coat, waving.

Fear and amazement gave way to confusion. How could he have misjudged me so? How could he have thought that I was not religious to the core of my being? What had caused him to think otherwise? Every move I made was recorded, that I knew: how many hours sleep I took, how many bowls of rice I ate, what I said at every meeting. No doubt a weekly report on my behaviour was sent for analysis and then submitted to Mao. That being so, he surely could not have failed to notice that every day I spent at least four hours in prayer and meditation and that furthermore, all the time I was in China, I was receiving religious instruction from my tutors. He must have known too that I was working hard towards my final monastic examinations, which now could not be very many years away, six or seven at the most. I was perplexed.

The only possible explanation was that he had misinterpreted my great interest in scientific matters and material progress. It was true that I wanted to modernise Tibet in line with the People's Republic and true also that my cast of mind is basically scientific. So it could only be that, in his ignorance of Buddhist philosophy, Mao had ignored the Buddha's instruction that anyone who practises the *Dharma* should test for themselves its validity. For this reason I have always been open to the discoveries and truths of modern science. Perhaps this was what tricked Mao into thinking that my religious practices were nothing more to me than a prop or convention. Whatever his reasoning, I now knew that he had misjudged me completely.

Next day, I left Peking for the return journey to Tibet. Progress was faster than it had been the previous year now that the Qinghai highway had been completed. On the way, I took the opportunity to stop for two or three days at a time in different places so that I could meet with as many of my countrymen as possible and tell them something of my experiences in China and what hope I had for the future. In spite of having had to revise my opinion of Mao, I still felt that he was a great leader and above all a sincere person. He was not deceitful. Therefore, I was convinced that so long as his officials in Tibet carried out his instructions, and provided he kept a firm control of them, there was good reason to be optimistic. Besides, as far as I was concerned, a positive approach was the only sensible one to take. There was no point in being negative: that only makes a bad situation worse. Not that my optimism was shared by many of my entourage. Few of them had gained a good impression of China and they were afraid that the rigid methods of the Communists would lead to oppression in Tibet. They were further disturbed by a story then circulating about a high official in the Chinese Government, called Gan Kung. It was whispered that he had been critical of Lu Rau-chi and for this had been murdered in a most horrible way.

It was not long before I began to have fresh doubts of my own. When I visited Tashikiel in far eastern Tibet, there was a huge turn-out of people. Many thousands had travelled to be able to see me and pay their respects. I was deeply moved by their great devotion. However, I was devastated to hear, some time later, that the Chinese authorities had misled people into believing that I would arrive a week later than I actually did. They lied about the date in order to prevent people from seeing me. As a result, thousands more turned up after I left.

A further cause for unhappiness was the paranoia of the Chinese concerning my personal safety. When I visited my home village, they insisted that I should not accept food from anyone but my own cooks. This meant that I could not receive any of the offerings brought to me by my people, even though some of them were from my own family who still lived in Taktser. As if any one of

these simple, devout, humble people would ever take it into their heads to try to poison the Dalai Lama. My mother was deeply upset. She did not know what to tell them. And when I spoke to Tibetans there, asking about their living conditions, they replied that, 'Thanks to Chairman Mao, to Communism and the People's Republic of China, we are very happy' – but with tears in their eyes.

Throughout my journey back to Lhasa, I received as many people as possible. Unlike China, this was not difficult. Thousands came, bringing their sick and old, just to catch a glimpse of me. A lot of Chinese attended these gatherings as well. This gave me the opportunity to express the need for them to understand the Tibetan mentality. In doing so, I took the trouble to find out which were Party members and which were not. Experience had taught me that the former were, on the whole, more straightforward.

The attitude of the Chinese authorities in Tibet towards me was very interesting. On one occasion, an official said, 'The Chinese people do not love Chairman Mao so much as Tibetans love the Dalai Lama.' On another, a guard, who was throwing his weight around in a very brutal manner, came over to my jeep and demanded to know where the Dalai Lama was. At the reply of 'Here', he took off his hat and asked for a blessing. And when I had left Chengdu, many of the Chinese officials who accompanied me throughout my visit wept to see me go. I had similarly warm feelings towards them: despite our differences of opinion, we had developed a strong, personal relationship.

Seeing the country people of Tibet after so many months allowed me to look afresh at the differences between them and their Chinese counterparts. For a start, you could tell just by comparing their faces that the Tibetans were much happier. This was due to a number of cultural factors I feel. Firstly, the relationship between landlord and serf was much milder in Tibet than in China and conditions for the poor were much less harsh. Secondly, in Tibet there was never anything like the barbarisms of foot-binding or castration, which until recently had been widespread

throughout China. However, I think that these points were lost on the Chinese, who looked on our feudal system as a replica of their own.

Shortly before reaching Lhasa, I met up with Chou En-lai, who had flown to a place in Kham that had just suffered an earthquake. It was a curious encounter in which he said some positive things about religion. I still wonder why, as this was very much out of character. Perhaps he was speaking on Mao's instructions, trying to repair the damage done at our final meeting.

Mr Nehru Regrets



WHEN I ARRIVED back in Lhasa in June 1955, I was greeted as usual by many thousands of people. My long absence had caused much sorrow amongst Tibetans and it was a relief that they now had the Dalai Lama back in their midst. It was a relief for me as well. Evidently, the Chinese were behaving with more restraint here than in eastern Tibet. On the return journey from China I had received, in addition to many ordinary people, numerous deputations from local chieftains begging that I ask our new masters to change their policies in those rural areas. They saw that the Chinese directly threatened the Tibetan way of life and were very afraid.

In the city itself, I found things were relatively normal, except that there were now many cars and trucks bringing noise and pollution to the city for the first time in history. The food shortages had eased and active displays of anger had given way to resentment mixed with passive resistance. Now that I was back, there was even a resurgence of optimism. For my part, I felt that my status amongst the local Chinese authorities must be enhanced by Mao's public show of confidence in me and I remained cautiously optimistic for the future.

Yet I was conscious that outside Tibet the world had turned its back on us. Worse, India, our nearest neighbour and spiritual mentor, had tacitly accepted Peking's claims to Tibet. In April 1954, Nehru had signed a new Sino-Indian treaty which included a memorandum known as Panch Sheel, whereby it was agreed that India and China would under no circumstances interfere with one another's 'internal' affairs. According to this treaty, Tibet was part of China.

The summer of 1955 was undoubtedly the best we were to experience during the decade of uneasy coexistence between the Chinese authorities and my own Tibetan administration. But summer in Tibet is a short season and it was not many weeks before disturbing news began to reach my ears about the activities of the Chinese authorities in Kham and Amdo. Far from leaving the people be, they had begun to press ahead unilaterally with all kinds of 'reform'. New taxes were imposed on houses, land and cattle, and, to add insult to injury, the contents of monasteries were also assessed for tax. Large estates were confiscated and the land redistributed by the local Chinese cadres in accordance with their own political ideology. Landowners were publicly arraigned and punished for 'crimes against the people'; to my horror some were even put to death. Simultaneously, the Chinese authorities began to round up the many thousands of nomad farmers who roamed these fertile regions. To our new masters, nomadism was repugnant as it smacked of barbarism. (In fact, *mantze*, a common Chinese word for 'Tibetan', literally means 'barbarian'.)

Also disturbing was the news that the work of the monasteries was being grossly interfered with and the local population had begun to be indoctrinated against religion. Monks and nuns were subject to severe harassment and publicly humiliated. For example, they were forced to join in extermination programmes of insects, rats, birds and all types of vermin, even though the Chinese authorities knew that taking any form of life is contrary to Buddhist teaching. If they refused, they were beaten. Meanwhile, the Chinese in Lhasa carried on as if nothing was amiss. By not interfering with religion here in the capital, they were clearly hoping that I would be lulled into a false sense of security whilst they did as they pleased elsewhere.

Towards the end of 1955, preparations were put in hand for the inauguration of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART), Mao's alternative to rule by military commission. But as autumn progressed to winter, the news from the east became worse. The Khampas, who were not used to outside interference, did not take kindly to Chinese methods: of

all their possessions, the one they valued above all others was their personal weapon. So when the local cadres began to confiscate these, the Khampas reacted with violence. Throughout the winter months the situation deteriorated rapidly. As it did so, refugees from Chinese oppression began to arrive in Lhasa, bringing with them horrifying stories of brutality and degradation. The Chinese dealt viciously with Khampa resistance: not only were public beatings and executions carried out, but often these were done by the victim's own child. Public criticism was also introduced. This is a method especially favoured by the Chinese Communists. The 'offender' is trussed up with a rope in such a way that the shoulders are dislocated. Then, when the person is utterly helpless and crying out in pain, members of the public – including women and children – are called forward to inflict further injury. Apparently, the Chinese felt that this was all it took to make people change their minds, and that it aided in the process of political re-education.

At the beginning of 1956, during *Losar*, I had a very interesting encounter with the Nechung oracle, who announced that the 'light of the Wish-Fulfilling Jewel [one of the names by which the Dalai Lama is known to Tibetans] will shine in the West'. I took this to indicate that I would travel that year to India, though I now see that the prophecy had a deeper implication.

A more pressing concern were the many refugees from Kham and Amdo who had recently arrived in Lhasa. The city was simmering. For the first time, there was an overtly political flavour to the New Year festivities. Posters denouncing the Chinese went up all over the capital and leaflets were distributed. The people held public meetings and elected popular leaders. Never before had Tibet witnessed such a thing. Naturally, the Chinese were furious. They quickly arrested three men who, they said, were responsible for inciting anti-democratic crimes. But this did nothing to curtail popular reaction to their rule.

During the *Monlam* festival, leading Amdowa and Khampa businessmen began to collect money for a ceremony of *Se-tri Chenmo* to be performed later in the year. This involves an offering

to the protector divinities of Tibet, beseeching them to grant the Dalai Lama long life and prosperity. So successful was their fund-raising that the occasion was marked by the donation to me of an immense, jewel-studded, golden throne. However, as I later discovered, this activity had another aspect. It also marked the formation of an alliance called *Chushi Gangdruk*, meaning 'Four rivers, six ranges', the traditional collective name for the two provinces of Kham and Amdo. This organisation subsequently co-ordinated a widespread guerrilla resistance movement.

After *Monlam*, preparations for the forthcoming inauguration of PCART, of which I was to be chairman, continued apace. Within a few short months the Chinese, using Tibetan labour, built three large public buildings: a guest-house for visiting Chinese officials, a bathing house and a municipal hall. This last was a modern, two-storeyed building with a corrugated iron roof, capable of seating about twelve hundred people in front of a raised platform and a further three hundred in a gallery above. It stood directly in front of the Potala.

In April 1956, Marshal Chen Yi, deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, arrived with his wife and a large delegation from Peking to represent Chairman Mao. I remembered Chen Yi from my visit to China. Personally he was a very nice man, although his reputation as a speaker was formidable. He once made a speech lasting a full seven hours. The Marshal appeared in Lhasa wearing a tie, of which he was very proud, though he did not seem to know how to wear it. And the shirt he wore could barely contain his paunch. None of this bothered him, however: he was jovial, fond of luxury and not lacking in self-confidence. His arrival in Lhasa signalled the start of an impressive show. The Chinese had laid on extravagant entertainments for him and there were many banquets and speeches held in his honour. When PCART was formally inaugurated at a meeting in the new municipal hall, the place was decorated with many flags and banners depicting Chairman Mao and his chief colleagues. A Chinese military band played and Communist

songs were sung. It was all very festive. Chen Yi then made a (comparatively short) speech in which he announced that 'necessary reforms' would be introduced 'to rid Tibet of its backward situation', explaining that this was necessary to bring the Tibetans up to the level of the 'advanced' Chinese nationality. There followed a succession of adulatory speeches made by Chinese and Tibetans alike, all praising Socialism and the Party and welcoming the presence of the Chinese in Tibet. I even had to make one myself, pointedly adding that I was sure that the Chinese would honour all their undertakings to introduce reform at the pace the people wanted and to permit freedom of worship.

The constitution of PCART provided for the creation of various new government departments to administer, for example, finance, education, agriculture, communications, medicine, religion and security. These were to be run mostly by Tibetans. Also the administration of Chamdo was to return to Lhasa. Together they comprised the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. However, the rest of Kham and all of Amdo were to remain under the direct control of Peking. The Committee itself was to be comprised of fifty-one regional delegates. Only five were Chinese. At the same time, the *Kashag* and the National Assembly were to remain, although it was clear that the Chinese intended to marginalise and eventually to do away with all traces of traditional government.

Whilst on paper PCART promised to mark an important advance towards autonomy, the reality was very different. When Chen Yi announced the appointments, it turned out that of these fifty-one delegates (none of whom was elected), all but a handful owed their positions to the Chinese: they were allowed to keep their power and property so long as they did not voice any opposition. In other words, it was all a sham.

Nevertheless, there were a few surprises. One of these was Lobsang Samten's appointment as a member of the newly created security department. Being such a kind and gentle person, there can have been no one less suited to the job than he. I shall never forget the look on his face when he returned from a meeting with

his Chinese opposite number. All had gone well until the man turned to Lobsang Samten (who spoke some Chinese) and asked him what was the Tibetan for 'Kill him'. Up to that moment my brother had thought this new official to be quite pleasant and straightforward, but this question left him dumbfounded. The idea of killing even an insect was so far from his mind that he was lost for words. When he arrived at the Norbulingka that same evening, his face was full of bewilderment. 'What *am* I to do?' he asked. This story is another illustration of the differences between Chinese and Tibetan attitudes. To one, the killing of human beings was a fact of life; to the other, it was unthinkable.

Shortly after the inauguration of PCART, I heard that the Chinese authorities in Kham made an attempt to win over all the local leaders. This they did by calling them all together and asking them to vote on the introduction of the 'democratic reforms', meaning, specifically, the establishment of several thousand agricultural co-operatives which were to comprise more than 100,000 households in the area that included Gar-chu and Karze. Of the 350 people they assembled, about two hundred agreed to go along with the reforms when I and my Cabinet consented to them. Forty said that they were prepared to accept them straight away, and the remainder said that they never wanted these so-called reforms. After that, they were allowed home.

A month later, the dissenters were summoned once more, this time to a fort called Jomdha Dzong, which lay to the north-east of Chamdo. As soon as they were inside, the building was surrounded by 5,000 PLA troops and the captives were told that they would not be released until they agreed to accept the reforms and promise that they would help carry them out. After two weeks of imprisonment, the Khampas gave in. There seemed to be no alternative. However, that night the guard on the fort was reduced. Seeing their opportunity, every one of them escaped and took to the hills. At a stroke, the Chinese had created a nucleus of outlaws, which in the years to come caused them many difficulties.

The incident at Jomdha Dzong occurred at around the same time as I was given a copy of a newspaper, published by the Chinese

authorities at Karze in Kham. In disbelief, I saw that it contained a photograph of a row of severed heads. The caption said something to the effect that they had belonged to 'reactionary criminals'. This was the first concrete evidence of Chinese atrocity that I had seen. Thereafter, I knew that every terrible thing I heard about our new masters' behaviour was true. The Chinese, for their part, realising the bad effect that this newspaper was having on the people, tried to call it back – even offering to buy copies.

With this new information, coupled with the realisation that PCART was nothing but *tzuma* (eye-wash), I began to wonder whether there could be any hope for the future. My predecessor's prophecy was beginning to be proved entirely accurate. I was sick at heart. Outwardly, however, my life continued much as usual. I prayed, meditated and studied hard under my tutors. I also continued as usual to take part in all the religious festivals and ceremonies and to give and receive teachings from time to time. Occasionally, I used my authority to travel and left Lhasa to visit various monasteries. One such excursion was to Reting monastery, seat of the former Regent, which lay a few days' journey to the north of Lhasa. Shortly before leaving, I received a letter sent from an important Tibetan already living in exile. The situation in Lhasa had become so grave that even I began to feel suspicious and rather than open it, I kept it on my person, at night placing it carefully under my pillow until after I left for Reting.

It was such a relief to get out of the city and away from the madness of trying simultaneously to work with the Chinese authorities and to limit the damage they caused. As ever, I travelled as unostentatiously as possible and tried to remain incognito. In this way I was able to meet with the local people and hear what they had to say. On one particular occasion, not far from Reting, I fell into conversation with a herdsman. 'Who are you?' he asked. He was a tall, sturdy man with long, shaggy hair like a yak's. 'A servant of the Dalai Lama,' I replied. We talked about his life out here in the countryside and about his hopes and fears for the future. He knew little about the Chinese and had never been to Lhasa. He was too busy coaxing a living from the earth, with its

thin, bitter soil, to worry about what was going on in the cities and beyond.

Yet for all his simplicity, I was delighted to find that he had a deep religious conviction and that the Buddha *Dharma* was thriving even in this remote region. He lived the life of peasants everywhere, in tune with Nature and the environment, but with little interest in the world that lay beyond his immediate horizon. I questioned him about his experiences with local government officials. He told me that they were mostly fair, though a few were officious. I greatly enjoyed our talk, which gave me many useful insights. Above all I learned that, despite this man's total lack of education, he was content and that, although he had not the slightest material comfort, he was secure in the knowledge that life for him was just as it had been for countless generations of his forebears and doubtless would continue the same for his children and their children. At the same time, I realised that this world view was no longer appropriate, that Tibet could no longer exist in elected peaceful isolation, no matter what the outcome with the Communist Chinese. When we finally parted company, we did so as the best of friends.

But the story continues. It so happened that the following day I was called upon to address the people of the next village that lay along our route and give them my blessing. A makeshift throne was put out for me and several hundred people gathered. All went well at first but then, looking around, I saw my friend of the day before standing amongst the audience with a look of abject bewilderment on his face. He could not believe his eyes. I smiled at him, but he stared blankly back. I felt quite sorry to have duped him.

When I actually arrived at Reting monastery, and came to pay my respects before its most important statue, I remember that, for no particular reason, I became very emotional. I felt a powerful sense of having in some way been long connected with the place. Since then, I have often thought of building a hermitage at Reting and spending the rest of my life there.

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During the summer of 1956, an incident occurred which brought me more unhappiness than at almost any time before or since. The Khampa/Amdowa freedom-fighters' alliance began to have considerable success. By May/June, numerous sections of the Chinese military road had been destroyed along with a great many bridges. As a result, the PLA drafted in 40,000 troop reinforcements. This was exactly what I had feared. No matter how successful the resistance was, the Chinese would overcome it in the end by sheer force of numbers and superior fire-power. But I could not have predicted the aerial bombing of the monastery at Lithang in Kham. When I heard of it, I cried. I could not believe that human beings were capable of such cruelty to each other.

This bombardment was followed by the merciless torture and execution of women and children whose fathers and husbands had joined the resistance movement and, incredibly, by the disgusting abuse of monks and nuns. After arrest, these simple, religious people were forced – in public – to break their vows of celibacy with one another and even to kill people. I did not know what to do, but do something I must. I immediately demanded a meeting with General Chiang Kuo-ha, whom I informed that I was intending to write personally to Chairman Mao. 'How are Tibetans supposed to trust the Chinese if this is how you behave?' I demanded. I told him point-blank that it was wrong for them to have done such a thing. But this only started an argument. My criticisms were an insult to the Motherland, which wanted only to protect and assist my people. If some of my countrymen did not want reforms – reforms which would benefit the masses because they would prevent their exploitation – then they could expect to be punished. His reasoning was lunatic. I told him that this could in no way justify the torture of innocent people, still less bombing them from the air.

It was a useless exercise, of course. The General stood his ground. My only hope was that Chairman Mao would see that his subordinates were disobeying his instructions.

I dispatched a letter straight away. There was no reply. So I

sent another, again via the official channel. At the same time, I persuaded Phuntsog Wangyal to deliver a third letter personally to Mao. But this also went unacknowledged. As the weeks went by and I had still heard nothing from Peking, I began for the first time really to doubt the intentions of the Chinese leadership. This shook me. After my visit to China, and despite the many negative impressions I had received, my attitude towards the Communists was still basically positive. Now, however, I began to see Chairman Mao's words as being like a rainbow – beautiful, but without substance.

Phuntsog Wangyal had arrived in Lhasa at the time of the inauguration of PCART. I was very glad to see him again. He was as committed as ever to Communism. After the April festivities, he accompanied some important Chinese officials on a tour of the outlying districts. On his return, he told me an amusing story. One of the Chinese high officials had asked a peasant living in some remote farming community what he thought of the new regime. The man replied that he was quite happy. 'Except for one thing. This new tax.' 'What new tax?' the official asked. 'The clapping tax. Every time a Chinese comes to visit, we all have to turn out and clap.'

I always felt that so long as Phuntsog Wangyal retained the confidence of Chairman Mao, there was hope for Tibet. After he had left for Peking once more, I therefore submitted a request to General Chiang Chin-wu that he be posted to Tibet as Party Secretary. At first the idea was accepted in principle, but there was a long gap before I heard anything more.

At the end of 1957, a Chinese official informed me that Phuntsog Wangyal would no longer be coming to Tibet because he was a dangerous man. I was amazed to hear this, as I knew that Chairman Mao thought highly of him. The official explained that there were several reasons, the first and foremost being that when he had lived in Kham, before coming to Lhasa, Phuntsog Wangyal had organised a separate Tibetan Communist Party which was not open to membership by Chinese nationals. For this crime he had been demoted and prevented from returning to Tibet. I was sorry

to hear this – and even more sad when I heard, the following year, that my old friend had been stripped of office and detained. Eventually, he went to jail, where he remained, officially designated a ‘non-person’, until the late 1970s. All this despite his being a sincere and dedicated Communist, as anyone could see. It made me realise that the Chinese leadership was not truly Marxist, dedicated to a better world for all, but really highly nationalistic. Actually, these people were nothing but Chinese chauvinists posing as Communists: a collection of narrow-minded fanatics.

Phuntsog Wangyal is still alive, though very old now. I would very much like to see him once more before he dies. I continue to have a high regard for him as an old, experienced Tibetan Communist. The present authorities in China are aware of this and I still have hopes that we might meet again.

One very welcome guest to Lhasa during the spring of 1956 was the Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim, Crown Prince of the tiny state which lay along part of our border with India not far beyond Dromo. He was a delightful man: tall, quiet, gentle and calm, with large ears. With him he brought wonderful news contained in the form of a letter from the Indian Maha Bodhi society, of which he was President. This organisation, which represents Buddhists throughout the sub-continent, was inviting me to attend the Buddha Jyanti celebrations to mark the 2,500th birth anniversary of the Lord Buddha.

I was ecstatic. For us Tibetans, India is *Aryabbumi*, the Land of the Holy. All my life I had longed to make a pilgrimage there: it was the place that I most wanted to visit. Furthermore, an expedition to India might provide me with the opportunity to speak with Pandit Nehru and other heirs of Mahatma Gandhi. I desperately wanted to be able to make contact with the Indian Government, if only to see the way that a democracy worked. Of course, there was a chance that the Chinese would not let me go, but I had to try. So I took the letter to General Fan Ming.

Unfortunately, Fan Ming was by far the most disagreeable of the local Chinese authorities. He received me politely enough. But when I explained the reason for my call he grew evasive. He

did not think it sounded like a good idea. There were many reactionaries in India. It was a dangerous place. Besides, the Preparatory Committee was very busy and he doubted whether I could be spared. 'Anyway,' he said, 'it's only an invitation from a religious society. It's not as if it was from the Indian Government itself. So don't worry, you don't have to accept.' I was devastated. It was obvious that the Chinese authorities intended even to prevent me from carrying out my religious duties.

A period of several months went by during which nothing more was said about Buddha Jyanti. Then, sometime about the middle of October, Fan Ming contacted me to ask who I wanted to nominate as leader of the delegation: the Indians needed to know. I replied that I would send Trijang Rinpoché, my Junior Tutor, adding that the delegation was ready to go as soon as he gave final clearance. Another two weeks went by and I gradually began to put the whole thing out of my mind when suddenly Chiang Chin-wu, who had just arrived back from Peking, came to tell me that the Chinese Government had decided that it would be all right for me to go after all. I could hardly believe my ears, so happy was I. 'But be careful,' he warned me. 'There are many reactionary elements and spies in India. If you try to do anything with them, I want you to realise that what happened in Hungary and Poland will happen in Tibet.' (He was referring to the brutal Russian response to rebellion in those countries.) When he had finished speaking, I realised that I should conceal my great joy and instead do my best to appear to be very anxious. I indicated that I was genuinely surprised and concerned at his information about imperialists and reactionaries. This reassured Chiang and he adopted a more conciliatory tone. 'Don't worry too much,' he said. 'If you have any difficulties, our Ambassador will always be there to help you.' With that our meeting ended. The General stood up and, with his customary formality, took leave of me. As soon as he was gone, I rushed off, smiling as if my mouth would reach my ears, to tell my personal attendants the news.

In the few days that remained before our departure, I heard an interesting story about this sudden about face by the Chinese

authorities. It transpired that the Indian Consulate in Lhasa had asked my officials whether I would in fact be going to India to attend the celebrations. On being given a negative answer, the Indians relayed this message to their own Government – with the result that Mr Nehru had personally intervened on my behalf. However, the Chinese authorities still did not want to let me go. It was not until General Chiang arrived back in Lhasa and discovered that the Indian Consul had told a number of people about Nehru's communication that, under threat of harm to Sino-Indian relations, the Chinese were forced to change their minds.

I finally left Lhasa towards the end of November 1956, full of joy at the prospect of being able to move about freely without the constant supervision of some Chinese official or other. My entourage was quite small and, thanks to the military roads that now ran north and south, east and west linking all of Tibet with China, we were able to travel almost the whole way to Sikkim by car. At Shigatse we paused to pick up the Panchen Lama and then continued on to Chumbithang, the last settlement before the Nathu pass, where the border lay. There we exchanged cars for horses and I bade farewell to General Tin Ming-yi, who had accompanied us from Lhasa. He seemed genuinely sorry to see me go. I think that he was convinced that my life was in danger from foreign imperialists, spies, revanchists and all the other demons in the Communist pantheon. He gave me another warning along the lines of General Chiang's and urged me to be careful, adding that I must explain to any foreign reactionaries I met all about Tibet's great progress since 'Liberation'. If they didn't believe me, he said, they could come to Tibet and see for themselves. I assured him that I would do my best. With that I turned to mount my pony and began the long trek up into the mists.

At the top of the Nathu pass there stood a large cairn set about with colourful prayer-flags. As is the custom, we each added a stone to the cairn and shouted out, '*Lha Gyal Lo!*' ('Victory to the gods!'), at the top of our voices before beginning the descent into the Kingdom of Sikkim.

On the other side, just below the pass, we were met in the mist by a welcoming party consisting of a military band, which played both the Tibetan and Indian national anthems, and several officials. One of these was Mr Apa B. Pant, formerly Indian Consul in Lhasa and now Political Officer in Sikkim. Also present was Sonam Topgyal Kazi, a Sikkimese who was to be my translator throughout the visit. And, of course, my friend Thondup Namgyal, the Maharaj Kumar, was there too.

From the border, I was escorted down to a small settlement on the edge of Lake Tsongo, where we were to spend the night. It was by now very dark and cold and snow lay deep on the ground. On arrival, I received a wonderful surprise – both Taktser Rinpoché and Gyalo Thondup, neither of whom I had seen for several years now, were there to greet me. Lobsang Samten and little Tenzin Choegyal had both travelled with me, so, for the first time in our lives, all five brothers were together.

The following day, we travelled to Gangtok, capital of Sikkim, first by pony, then by jeep and then, for the final leg of the journey, by saloon. At this point, I was met by the Maharajah of Sikkim, Sir Tashi Namgyal, whose car it was. There followed an amusing, but telling incident. Just as we were entering Gangtok, the convoy paused amongst a large crowd of people that had gathered. Thousands of people, including many joyful schoolchildren, pressed in from all sides, throwing *katas* and flowers, and prevented us from moving, when suddenly, an anonymous, young Chinese appeared from nowhere. Without a word, he tore down the Tibetan flag that flew from one wing of the car, opposite the Sikkimese state flag, and replaced it with a Chinese pennant.

We spent one night in Gangtok before leaving very early the next morning for Bagdogra airport. It was an unpleasant journey, I recall. I was very tired from having travelled all the way from Lhasa and, moreover, there had been a state banquet the night before. On top of that, I was, to my dismay, given noodles for breakfast, and then the heat in the car as we descended to the Indian plains was stifling.

The aeroplane that was waiting for us was much more comfort-

able than the one I had flown in in China. It took us to Allahabad, where we stopped for lunch, and then to Palam airport in New Delhi. As we sped along, thousands of feet above the teeming Indian towns and countryside, I reflected on how different India felt from China. I had been there for no time at all, but already I was aware of an immense gulf between the way of life of the two countries. Somehow, India seemed so much more open and at ease with herself.

This impression was reinforced when we landed at the Indian capital. A large guard of honour awaited us, along with Mr Nehru, the Prime Minister, and Dr Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President. There was more show and ceremony than anything I had seen in China but, at the same time, every word that was spoken, whether in greeting by the Prime Minister or in private by a minor official, had an undertone of sincerity. People expressed their real feelings and did not say just what they thought they ought to say. There was no artifice.

From the airport I was taken directly to Rashtrapathi Bhavan to meet the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad. I found him to be quite an old man, slow and very humble. He contrasted hugely with his aide-de-camp, a tall, splendid man in an impressive uniform, and with his very grand, ceremonial bodyguards.

The following day, I made a pilgrimage to Rajghat on the banks of the Jamuna river, where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated. It was a calm and beautiful spot and I felt very grateful to be there, the guest of a people who, like mine, had endured foreign domination; grateful also to be in the country that had adopted *Ahimsa*, the Mahatma's doctrine of non-violence. As I stood praying, I experienced simultaneously great sadness at not being able to meet Gandhi in person and great joy at the magnificent example of his life. To me, he was – and is – the consummate politician, a man who put his belief in altruism above any personal considerations. I was convinced too that his devotion to the cause of non-violence was the only way to conduct politics.

The next few days were taken up with the Buddha Jyanti celebrations. During these, I spoke of my belief that the teachings

of the Lord Buddha could lead not only to peace in the lives of individuals, but also to peace between nations. I also took the opportunity to have discussions with many Gandhians about how India had achieved independence through non-violence.

One of my main discoveries about India at this point was that, although the banquets and receptions to which I was frequently invited were considerably less elaborate than those I had attended in China, the prevailing atmosphere of sincerity meant that there was an opportunity for genuine friendship to develop. This was in direct contrast to my experience in the People's Republic, where the received opinion was that you can change people's minds by bullying them. I could now make comparisons and see for myself that this was faulty thinking. Only through the development of mutual respect, and in a spirit of truth, can friendship come about. By these means it is possible to move human minds, but never by force.

As a result of these observations, and mindful of an old Tibetan saying that a prisoner who once manages to escape should not go back, I began to consider remaining in India. I made up my mind to explore the possibility of seeking political asylum when I met with Pandit Nehru, which I did soon after.

In fact, I met with the Prime Minister on several occasions. He was a tall, good-looking man, whose Nordic features were emphasised by his small Gandhi cap. Compared with Mao, he appeared to have less self-assurance, but then there was nothing dictatorial about him. He seemed honest – which was why he was later deceived by Chou En-lai. The first time we met, I took the opportunity to explain in detail the full story of how the Chinese had invaded our peaceful land, of how unprepared we were to meet an enemy and of how hard I had tried to accommodate the Chinese as soon as I was aware that no one in the outside world was prepared to acknowledge our rightful claim to independence.

At first he listened and nodded politely. But I suppose that my passionate speech must have been too long for him and after a while he appeared to lose concentration, as if he was about to nod off. Finally, he looked up at me and said that he understood

what I was saying. 'But you must realise,' he went on somewhat impatiently, 'that India cannot support you.' As he spoke in clear, beautiful English, his long lower lip quivered as if vibrating in sympathy with the sound of his voice.

This was bad, but not entirely unexpected news. And although Nehru had now made his position clear, I continued by saying that I was considering seeking exile in India. Again he demurred. 'You must go back to your country and try to work with the Chinese on the basis of the Seventeen-Point "Agreement".' I protested that I had already tried my utmost to do so, adding that every time I thought I had reached an understanding with the Chinese authorities, they broke my trust. And now the situation in eastern Tibet was so bad that I feared a massive, violent reprisal which could end up destroying the whole nation. How could I possibly believe that the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' was workable any longer? Finally, Nehru said that he would speak on the subject personally to Chou En-lai, who was due in Delhi the very next day en route to Europe. He would also arrange for me to meet the Chinese Minister.

Nehru was as good as his word and, the following morning, I went with him to Palam airport where he arranged for me to see Chou that evening. When we met again I found my old friend just as I remembered him: full of charm, smiles and deceit. But I did not respond to his artful manners. Instead, I told him quite straightforwardly of my concern about how the Chinese authorities were behaving in eastern Tibet. I also pointed out the marked difference I had noticed between the Indian Parliament and the Chinese system of government: the freedom of people in India to express themselves as they really felt and to criticise the Government if they thought it necessary. As usual, Chou listened carefully before replying with words that positively caressed the ear. 'You were present in China only at the time of the First Assembly,' he said. 'Since then, the Second Assembly has met and everything has changed immeasurably for the better.' I did not believe him, but it was useless to argue. Then he said that he had heard a rumour that I was considering staying in India. It would be a

mistake, he warned. My country needed me. That was perhaps true, but I left feeling that we had resolved nothing.

My two brothers, Taktser Rinpoché and Gyalo Thondup, also met with Chou, or 'Chew and Lie' as one Indian newspaper called him, whilst he was in Delhi. They were even more forthright than I was and told him that they had no intention of returning to Lhasa, despite his entreaties with them to do so. Meanwhile, I began at last my pilgrimage to the holy places of India, during which I tried to put politics out of my mind. Unfortunately, I found it almost impossible to shake off anxious thoughts about the fate of my country. The Panchen Lama, who accompanied me everywhere, was a constant reminder of our terrible situation. No longer was he the kind and humble boy I had known before: the constant pressure put upon his adolescent mind by the Chinese had had an inevitable effect.

Still, I found a few moments when I was able to give myself wholly to deep feelings of joy and veneration as I journeyed across the country from Sanchi to Ajanta, then to Bodh Gaya and Sarnath: I felt that I had returned to my spiritual home. Everything seemed somehow familiar.

In Bihar, I visited Nalanda, site of the greatest and most famous Buddhist university which had lain in ruins for hundreds of years. Many Tibetan scholars had studied there and now, as I looked at the pitiful piles of rubble that marked the birthplace of some of the most profound Buddhist thought, I saw again how true is the doctrine of Impermanence.

Finally, I reached Bodh Gaya. I was deeply moved to be at the very place where the Lord Buddha had attained Enlightenment. But my happiness did not last long. Whilst there, I received a message from my Chinese escorts saying that Chou En-lai was returning to Delhi and wanted to see me. Then in Sarnath, I received a telegram from General Chiang Chin-wu requesting that I return to Lhasa forthwith. Subversive reactionaries and imperialist collaborators were planning a revolt and my presence was required urgently, it said.

I returned to Delhi by train and was met by the Chinese

Ambassador at the station. To the alarm of my Lord Chamberlain and my bodyguard, he insisted that I travel with him in his car to the Embassy, where I met with Chou En-lai. The two men feared that I might be kidnapped and when they reached the Embassy were uncertain whether I was really there or not, so they asked someone there to take a sweater up to me to see what their reaction was. Meanwhile, I was having a frank discussion with Chou. He told me that the situation in Tibet had deteriorated, indicating that the Chinese authorities were ready to use force to crush any popular uprising.

At this point I restated bluntly my concern at the way the Chinese were behaving in Tibet, forcing on us unwanted reforms, despite explicit reassurances that they would do no such thing. Again he replied with great charm, saying that Chairman Mao had announced that no reform should be introduced in Tibet for at least the next six years. And if after that we were still not ready, they could be postponed for fifty years if necessary: China was only there to help us. Still I was not convinced. Chou continued, saying he understood that I was planning to pay a visit to Kalimpong. This was true. I had been asked to deliver teachings to the large Tibetan population that lived there. He strongly advised me not to do so as it was 'full of spies and reactionary elements'. He added that I should be careful of which Indian officials I trusted: that some were good, but that others were dangerous. Then he changed the subject. Would I, he asked, be prepared to return to Nalanda and, in my capacity as a representative of the People's Republic of China, present to the organisation there a cheque and a relic of Tang s'en, the Chinese spiritual master? Knowing that Pandit Nehru would be present at this function, I accepted.

When I saw him next, the Indian Prime Minister had with him a copy of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. Again, he urged me to return to Tibet and to work with the Chinese on the basis of the 'Agreement'. There was no alternative, he said, adding that he must make it clear that India could be of no assistance to Tibet. He also told me that I should do as Chou En-lai said and return

to Lhasa without stopping at Kalimpong. But when I pressed him on this point, he suddenly changed his mind. 'India is a free country, after all,' he said. 'You would not be breaking any of her laws.' He then undertook to make all the necessary arrangements for the visit.

It was February 1957 when I journeyed by train with my small entourage to Calcutta. On the way, I remember that my mother, unaware of any restrictions and feeling totally unrestrained, brought out a small stove and cooked a most delicious *thugpa* (traditional Tibetan noodle soup). After our arrival in the capital of West Bengal, we remained a few days before flying north to Bagdogra, where the foothills of the Himalayas begin their craggy ascent from the hot immensity of the Indian plains. For the final leg of the journey we travelled by jeep. When we reached Kalimpong I went to stay in the same house, owned by a Bhutanese family, that my predecessor had stayed in once during his period of exile in India. They gave me the very same room that he had used. It was a strange feeling to be there under such similar circumstances. The family of this very friendly household was that of the Bhutanese Prime Minister, who was later assassinated. There were three young sons, the smallest of which took a great interest in their guest. He kept coming up to my room as if to check up on me. Then, laughing, he would slide down the banisters.

Not long after my arrival I was met by Lukhangwa, my former Prime Minister, who had recently arrived from Lhasa, ostensibly on a pilgrimage. I was very pleased to see him, although I quickly discovered that he was utterly opposed to my returning home. My two brothers, who had likewise travelled to Kalimpong, agreed with him and now began to try to persuade me to stay. The three of them also begged the *Kashag* not to let me return. Whilst in Bodh Gaya, my brothers had made contact with a number of sympathetic Indian politicians, one of whom – Jaya Prakash Narayan – had promised on some future appropriate occasion to raise India's voice in support of Tibetan freedom. My brothers, Lukhangwa and one or two others were certain that when this

happened, Nehru would be forced to support Tibetan independence. After all, it did not benefit India to have Chinese troops on her northern border. But I was not convinced. I asked Ngabo Ngawang Jigme (the leader of the delegation which had been forced to sign the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'), who was also in my entourage, what he thought. His advice was that if it were possible to come up with a definite plan, then it might be worthwhile to consider staying. But in the absence of anything concrete, he felt that I had no alternative but to return.

I consulted the oracle. There are three principal oracles whose advice the Dalai Lama can seek. Two of them, Nechung and Gadong, were present. Both said that I should return. Lukhangwa came in during one of these consultations, at which the oracle grew angry, telling him to remain outside. It was as if the oracle knew that Lukhangwa had made up his mind. But Lukhangwa ignored him and sat down all the same. Afterwards he came up to me and said, 'When men become desperate they consult the gods. And when the gods become desperate, they tell lies'!

My two brothers were adamant that I should not return to Tibet. Like Lukhangwa, they were both powerful and persuasive men. Neither could understand my hesitation. They believed that with the very existence of the Tibetan people under threat, it was essential to confront the Chinese in any way possible. The best way to do this, they felt, was for me to remain in India. It would then be possible to seek foreign support, which they were sure would be easy to obtain. They were convinced that America would help us.

Although there was no talk at this time of an armed struggle against the Chinese, my brothers, unbeknown to me, had already made contact with the American Central Intelligence Agency. Apparently, the Americans felt that it was worthwhile to provide limited assistance to the Tibetan freedom fighters, not because they cared about Tibetan independence, but as part of their worldwide efforts to destabilise all Communist governments. To this end they undertook to supply a limited amount of simple weaponry to the freedom fighters by air-drop. They also made

plans for the CIA to train some of them in techniques of guerrilla warfare and then parachute them back into Tibet. Naturally, my brothers judged it wise to keep this information from me. They knew what my reaction would have been.

When I explained that, although I could see the logic of their arguments, I could not accept them, Gyalo Thondup began to show signs of agitation. He was – and still is – the most fiercely patriotic of my brothers. He has a very strong character and a tendency to be single-minded to the point of stubbornness. But his heart is good and, of all of us, he was the most affected when our mother died. He cried a great deal. Taktser Rinpoché is milder mannered than Gyalo Thondup, but underneath his calm and jovial exterior there lies a tough and unyielding core. He is good in a crisis, but on this occasion he too showed signs of exasperation. In the end, neither prevailed and I made up my mind to return to Tibet to give the Chinese one last try, in accordance both with the advice of Nehru and the assurances of Chou En-lai.

After leaving Kalimpong, I was compelled to remain in Gangtok for a full month before being able to cross the Nathu pass once more. But I did not regret this at all and I took the opportunity to give teachings to the local population.

Finally, and with a heavy heart, I set out for the return journey to Lhasa towards the end of March 1957. My sadness was increased by Lobsang Samten's last-minute decision to remain in India due to his poor physical condition following a recent operation for appendicitis. When I reached the border and bade farewell to the last of my Indian friends – all of whom wept – my spirits sank even lower. Fluttering amongst the colourful Tibetan prayer-flags were at least a dozen blood-red banners proclaiming the People's Republic of China. It was no consolation at all that General Chin. Rhawo-rhen had come to meet me. For, although he was a good and sincere man, I could not help thinking of him in terms of the military uniform that he wore, rather than in terms of 'liberation'.

Escape into Exile



ONCE OVER THE Tibetan border, I drove back to Lhasa via Dromo, Gyantse and Shigatse. At each place I addressed large public gatherings, to which I invited both Tibetan and Chinese officials. As usual, I gave a short, spiritual teaching combined with what I had to say about temporal matters. In doing so, I laid great emphasis on the obligation of all Tibetans to deal honestly and justly with the Chinese authorities. I insisted that it was the duty of everyone to right wrongs whenever they saw them, no matter who had committed them. I also urged my people to adhere strictly to the principles of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. I told them of my talks with Nehru and Chou En-lai and of how, during the first week of February that year, Chairman Mao himself had publicly acknowledged that Tibet was not yet ready for reform. Finally, I reminded them of the Chinese claim that they were in Tibet to help Tibetans. If any of the authorities failed to be co-operative, they were acting against Communist Party policy. I added that others could be left to sing praises, but we, according to Chairman Mao's own directive, should be self-critical. At this, the Chinese present became clearly uncomfortable.

In this way I tried to assure my people that I was doing all I could for them and to send warning to our new, foreign masters that, from now on, there would be no hesitation in pointing out malpractices whenever necessary. However, at every stage along the journey, my forced optimism was dealt fresh blows by the news and reports of widespread fighting in the east. Then one day, General Tan Kuan-sen, the Political Commissar, came to meet me and asked that I send a representative to ask the freedom

fighters to lay down their arms. Since this was my own wish, I agreed to do so and sent a lama to talk with them. But they did not, and by the time I reached Lhasa on 1 April 1957, I knew that the situation throughout Tibet was rapidly slipping not only from Chinese control, but also from my own.

In midsummer there was open warfare throughout Kham and Amdo. The freedom fighters, under the command of a man named Gampo Tashi, were increasing their numbers on a daily basis and becoming ever more audacious in their raids. The Chinese, for their part, showed no restraint. As well as using aircraft to bomb towns and villages, whole areas were laid waste by artillery barrage. The result was that thousands of people from Kham and Amdo fled to Lhasa and were now camped on the plains outside the city. Some of the stories they brought with them were so horrifying that I did not really believe them for many years. The methods that the Chinese used to intimidate the population were so abhorrent that they were almost beyond the capacity of my imagination. It was not until I read the report published in 1959 by the International Commission of Jurists that I fully accepted what I had heard: crucifixion, vivisection, disembowelling and dismemberment of victims was commonplace. So too were beheading, burning, beating to death and burying alive, not to mention dragging people behind galloping horses until they died or hanging them upside down or throwing them bound hand and foot into icy water. And, in order to prevent them shouting out, 'Long live the Dalai Lama', on the way to execution, they tore out their tongues with meat hooks.

Realising that disaster was in the offing, I announced that I would present myself for my final monastic examinations during the *Monlam* festival of 1959, eighteen months from now. I felt that I must graduate as soon as possible, lest time run out. At the same time, I began very much to look forward to the arrival in Lhasa of Pandit Nehru, who had accepted my invitation (warmly approved by the Chinese Ambassador) to visit Tibet the following year. I hoped that his presence would compel the Chinese authorities to start behaving in a civilised way.

Meanwhile, life in the capital continued much as it always had since the Chinese first arrived six years before, although they themselves became significantly more aggressive. From now on, whenever the Generals came to see me, they were armed. They did not wear their guns openly, however, but concealed them under their clothes. This forced them to adopt very awkward positions when they sat down, and even then the barrels were clearly visible. When they spoke, they continued to offer me the usual assurances, but their faces betrayed their real feelings by turning the colour of radishes.

Also, the Preparatory Committee continued to meet on a regular basis to discuss meaningless policy amendments. It was extraordinary to what lengths the Chinese authorities went to provide a façade behind which they could carry out their abominations elsewhere in the country. I felt powerless. Yet I was certain that if I resigned (which I did consider doing) or opposed the Chinese directly, the consequences would be devastating. And I could not allow Lhasa and those areas of Tibet that were not so far engulfed in bloodshed to succumb as well. Already there were at least eight divisions of the PLA operating in the east: over 150,000 trained men with sophisticated battlefield technology confronting an irregular band of horsemen and mountain warriors. The more I thought about the future, the less hope I felt. It seemed that no matter what I or any of my people did, sooner or later all of Tibet would be turned into a mere vassal state in the new Chinese Empire, without religious or cultural freedoms, let alone those of free speech.

Life at the Norbulingka, where I stayed permanently now, also continued much as ever. The thousands of gilded Buddhas that stood flickering in the gentle light of countless butter lamps were a pointed reminder that we live in a world of Impermanence and Illusion. My routine was much the same as it always had been, although now I got up earlier, usually before five o'clock, to pray and study texts alone for the first part of the morning. Later on, one of my tutors would come to discuss the texts I was reading.

Then we would be joined by my *tsenshap*, of whom there were now four, and I spent much of the rest of the day debating – for this was how I would be examined. And, as usual, I would, on certain days of the calendar, preside over a *puja* in one of the many palace shrine-rooms.

Lhasa itself had changed considerably since the Chinese invasion, however. A whole new district had sprung up to accommodate the Communist officials and their dependents. Already there was evidence of a modern Chinese city which would one day swamp the ancient capital. They had built a hospital and a new school – although I regret to say that these were of little benefit to the Tibetan population – and several new barracks. Also, in view of the deteriorating situation, the military had begun to dig trenches around their quarters and fortify them with sandbags. And now when they went out, whereas before they had felt secure enough to go in pairs (though never alone), they did so only in convoys. But my contact with this world was slight and most of my information about it came from the dismal reports brought to me by my sweepers and various officials.

In the spring of 1958, I moved into a new palace at the Norbulingka, it being the tradition for each successive Dalai Lama to found his own building within the Jewel Park. Like the others, mine was quite small and designed to be used as no more than my own personal living quarters. What made it special, however, were the modern fittings and appliances with which it was furnished. I had a modern, iron bed in place of my old wooden box; and there was a bathroom complete with running water. There was plumbing for heating it too, but unfortunately my tenure at the Norbulingka was interrupted before it could be got to work properly. Electric lighting was also fitted throughout, on both floors. In my audience-room I had chairs and tables rather than the traditional Tibetan cushions (for the benefit of foreign visitors), as well as a large radio, a gift from the Indian Government, if I remember correctly. It was the perfect home. Outside, there was a small pond and a beautiful rockery and a garden whose planting I personally supervised. Everything grows well in Lhasa and it was soon electric

with colour. Altogether, I was extremely happy there, but not for long.

The fighting throughout Kham and Amdo and now central Tibet continued to gain momentum. By early summer several tens of thousands of freedom fighters had joined forces and were pressing home their raids closer and closer to Lhasa, despite being poorly supplied with small arms and ammunition. Some of what they had was captured from the Chinese, some of it had come from a raid on a Tibetan Government ammunition dump near Tashilhunpo, and a small amount of it had duly materialised courtesy of the CIA, but they were still hopelessly ill-equipped.

When I went into exile, I heard stories of how weapons and money were dropped into Tibet by aircraft. However, these missions caused almost more harm to the Tibetans than to the Chinese forces. Because the Americans did not want their assistance to be attributable, they took care not to supply US-manufactured equipment. Instead, they dropped only a few badly made bazookas and some ancient British rifles which had once been in general service throughout India and Pakistan and thus could not be traced to source in the event of capture. But the mishandling they received whilst being air-dropped rendered them almost useless.

Naturally, I never saw any of the fighting but, during the 1970s, an old lama who had recently escaped from Tibet told me of how he had once observed a skirmish from his hermitage cell high up in the mountains in a remote part of Amdo. A small posse of six horsemen had attacked a PLA encampment several hundred strong, just near the bend of a river. The result was chaos. The Chinese panicked and started shooting wildly in all directions, killing large numbers of their own troops. Meanwhile the horsemen, having escaped across the river, turned back and, approaching from a different direction, attacked again from the flank before disappearing into the hills. I was very moved to hear of such bravery.

The inevitable crisis point was finally reached during the second half of 1958, when members of *Chushi Gangdruk*, the freedom-fighters' alliance, besieged a major PLA garrison at Tsethang, hardly more than two days' travel from the gates of Lhasa itself.

At this point, I began to see more and more of General Tan Kuan-sen. He looked like a peasant and had yellow teeth and close-cropped hair, and he now came on an almost weekly basis, accompanied by very arrogant interpreters, to urge, cajole and abuse me. Previously his visits had rarely been more than once a month. As a result, I grew to loathe my new audience-room at the Norbulingka. Its very atmosphere was tainted by the tension of our interviews and I began to dread going in there.

At first the General demanded that I mobilise the Tibetan army against the 'rebels'. It was my duty to do so, he said. He was furious when I pointed out that if I did, he could be sure that the soldiers would take it as an opportunity to go over to the side of the freedom fighters. After this he confined himself to railing against the ungratefulness of Tibetans and saying that it would all end badly for us. Finally, he identified Taktser Rinpoché and Gyalo Thondup and several of my ex-officials (each of whom was out of the country) as culprits and ordered me to revoke their Tibetan citizenship. This I did, thinking that firstly they were abroad and therefore safe, and secondly that for the time being it was better to acquiesce than provoke the Chinese into open military confrontation within Lhasa itself. I wanted to avoid this by almost any means. I felt that if the people of Lhasa became involved in fighting, there could be no hope of restoring peace.

Meanwhile, the freedom fighters were in no mood to compromise. They even tried to secure my approval for what they were doing. Alas I could not give it, even though as a young man and a patriot I had some thought now to do so. I was still pinning hope on Nehru's impending visit, but at the last moment the Chinese authorities cancelled it. General Tan Kuan-sen announced that he could not guarantee the Indian Prime Minister's safety and the invitation would have to be withdrawn. This was a disaster, I felt.

At the end of summer 1958, I went to Drepung, followed by Sera monastery, for the initial part of my final monastic examination. This involved several days of debates with the most outstanding scholars of these two centres of learning. The first day at

Drepung began with the wonderfully harmonious chanting of several thousand monks in the public assembly hall. Their praise of the Buddha, his saints and successors (many of them Indian sages and teachers), moved me to tears.

Before leaving Drepung, I went, as per tradition, to the top of the tallest mountain behind the monastery, from which it was possible to obtain a panoramic view over literally hundreds of miles. It was so high that even for Tibetans there was a danger of altitude sickness – but not too high for the beautiful birds that nested far above the plateau, nor the profusion of wild flowers known in Tibetan as *upel*. These spectacular plants were light blue in colour, tall and thorny, and shaped like a delphinium.

Unfortunately, these pleasant observations were marred by the fact that it was necessary to deploy Tibetan soldiers in the mountains to protect me. For just in front of Drepung, there was a Chinese military garrison, set about with barbed wire and bunkers, within whose perimeter could be heard troops practising with small arms and artillery every day.

When I returned to Lhasa after my examinations were over, I learned that, so far, I had passed very well. One of the abbots, a most learned monk named Pema Gyaltsen, told me that if I had had the same opportunities for study as an ordinary monk, my performance would have been unsurpassed. So I felt very happy that this lazy student did not in the end disgrace himself.

Back in the capital, after this short interlude of sanity, I found the situation considerably worse than when I left. Thousands more refugees from Chinese atrocity outside Lhasa had arrived and were bivouacked on its outskirts. By now, the Tibetan population of the city must have been about double the usual number. Yet still there was an uneasy truce and no fighting actually took place. All the same, when, during the autumn, I went to Ganden to continue my debates, I was encouraged by some of my advisors to take the opportunity to head south, where much of the country was in the hands of the 'defenders of the Buddha *Dharma*'. The tentative plan was that I should then repudiate the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' and reinstate my own Government as the rightful

administration of Tibet. I gave serious thought to their proposition, but I was again forced to conclude that to do so would achieve nothing positive. Such a declaration would only provoke the Chinese into launching a full-scale attack.

So I returned to Lhasa to continue my studies throughout the long, cold, winter months. I had one final examination to take during *Monlam* at the beginning of the following year. It was hard to concentrate on my work. Almost every day I heard new reports of Chinese outrages against the non-combatant population. Sometimes the news was favourable to Tibet – but this gave me no comfort. Only the thought of my responsibility to the six million Tibetans kept me going. That and my faith. Early every morning, as I sat in prayer in my room before the ancient altar with its clutter of statuettes standing in silent benediction, I concentrated hard on developing compassion for all sentient beings. I reminded myself constantly of the Buddha's teaching that our enemy is in a sense our greatest teacher. And if this was sometimes hard to do, I never really doubted that it was so.

At last the new year came upon us and I left the Norbulingka to take up residence at the Jokhang for the *Monlam* festival, after which came my final examination. Just before I did so, I received General Chiang Chin-wu, who came, as was his custom, with a New Year message. He also announced the arrival in Lhasa of a new dance troupe from China. Might I be interested to see them? I replied that I would be. He then said that they could perform anywhere, but since there was a proper stage with footlights at the Chinese military headquarters, it might be better if I could go there. This made sense as there were no such facilities at the Norbulingka, so I indicated that I would be happy to do so.

When I arrived at the Jokhang, I found, as I had expected, more people thronging the temple than ever before. In addition to the laity drawn from the furthest reaches of Tibet, there must have been 25–30,000 monks mingled with the huge crowd.

Each day, the *Barkhor* and *Lingkhor* were packed with devotees earnestly circumambulating. Some went, prayer-wheel in hand, chanting the sacred words '*Om Mani Padme Hum*', almost our

national *mantra*. Others silently clasped their hands to forehead, to throat and to heart before prostrating themselves full-length on the ground. The market-place in front of the temple was also bursting with people: women, in floor-length dresses decorated with colourful aprons; jaunty Khampas, their long hair tied with bright red braid and rifles slung across their shoulders; wizened nomads from the hills; and everywhere gleeful children.

Never had I seen such bustle as I squinted through the curtains of my apartment windows. Only this year there was an air of expectancy that even I, secluded as I was, could not fail to notice. It was as if everyone knew that something momentous was about to happen.

Shortly after the main *Monlam* ceremony was over (the one involving a long recital), two junior Chinese officials came unannounced to renew General Chiang Chin-wu's invitation to see the dance troupe. They also asked for a date when I could attend. I replied that I would be pleased to go after the festival was over. But for the moment I had rather more important things to think about, namely my final examination, which was soon to take place.

The night beforehand I prayed earnestly and, as I did so, felt more deeply than ever before the awesome, unending responsibility that my office entails. Then, next morning, I presented myself for the debates which were to be held before an audience of many thousands of people. Before noon the subject was logic and epistemology, and my opponents were undergraduates like myself. In the middle of the day, the topics were *Madhyamika* and *Prajnaparamita*, again debated with undergraduates. Then in the evening, all five major subjects were hurled at me, this time by graduates, all of them considerably older and more experienced than myself.

At last, at around seven o'clock in the evening, it was all over. I felt exhausted – but relieved and delighted that the panel of judges had unanimously agreed that I was worthy to receive my degree and with it the title of *geshe*, or Doctor of Buddhist Studies.

On 5 March, I left the Jokhang to return to the Norbulingka, as usual in a splendid procession. For the last time, the full

pageantry of more than a thousand years of uninterrupted civilisation was on display. My bodyguard, dressed in their brightly coloured ceremonial uniforms, surrounded the palanquin in which I rode. Beyond them were the members of the *Kashag* and nobles of Lhasa sumptuously clad in silk and flowing robes, their horses stepping high as if they knew that the bits in their mouths were made of gold. Behind them came the most eminent abbots and lamas in the land, some lean and ascetic, others looking more like prosperous merchants than the highly evolved spiritual masters they were.

Finally, thousands upon thousands of citizens lined the route, and the road was packed with eager spectators along the full four-mile distance between the two buildings. The only people missing were the Chinese who, for the first time since their arrival, had neglected to send a contingent. This did nothing to reassure either my bodyguard or the army. The latter had posted men up in the hills nearby, ostensibly to 'protect' me from the freedom fighters. But in reality they had a very different enemy in mind. My bodyguards had a similar fear. Several of them openly established a position and kept their Bren gun pointing at the Chinese military headquarters.

It was not until two days later that I again had indirect communication with the Chinese authorities. They wanted to know for definite when I would be free to attend the theatrical show. I replied that the 10th of March would be convenient. Two days later, the day before the performance, some Chinese called on the *Kusun Depon*, commander of my bodyguard, at home, saying that they had been told to take him to the headquarters of Brigadier Fu, the military advisor. He wanted to brief him about arrangements for my visit the following evening.

The Brigadier began by telling him that the Chinese authorities wanted us to dispense with the usual formality and ceremony of my visits. Pointedly, he insisted that no Tibetan soldiers accompany me, only two or three unarmed bodyguards if absolutely necessary, adding that they wanted the whole affair to be conducted in absolute secrecy. These all seemed strange requests and

there was much discussion about them amongst my advisors afterwards. Nevertheless, all agreed that I could not refuse without causing a severe breach of diplomacy which might have very negative consequences. So I agreed to go with a minimum of fuss and to take along only a handful of staff.

Tenzin Choegyal, my younger brother, was also invited. He was by this time studying at Drepung monastery, so he was to travel independently. In the meantime, word went out that on the following day there were to be traffic restrictions in the vicinity of the stone bridge that led over the river adjacent to the Chinese headquarters.

Of course, it was completely impossible for my movements to be kept secret and the very fact that the Chinese wanted to do so shocked my people, who were already greatly concerned about my safety. The news spread like flames on dry grass.

The result was catastrophic. Next morning, after my prayers and then breakfast, I went outside in the quiet early morning light for a walk in the garden. Suddenly, I was startled by shouting in the distance. I hurried back inside and instructed some attendants to find out what the noise was all about. When they came back, they explained that people were pouring out of Lhasa and heading in our direction. They had decided to come and protect me from the Chinese. All morning their numbers grew. Some remained in groups at each entrance to the Jewel Park, others began to circumambulate it. By noon an estimated thirty thousand people had gathered. And during the morning, three members of the *Kashag* had difficulty getting past the crowds at the front entrance. The people were showing hostility to anyone they thought guilty of collaboration with the Chinese. One senior official, who was accompanied in his car by a bodyguard, was stoned and badly injured because people thought he was a traitor. They were mistaken. (During the 1980s, his son, who was a member of the delegation forced to sign the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement', came to India, where he wrote a detailed account of what really happened. But later, someone was actually killed.

I was appalled at this news. Something had to be done to defuse

the situation. It sounded to me as though, in a fit of anger, the crowd might even be tempted to attack the Chinese garrison. A number of popular leaders had been spontaneously elected and were calling for the Chinese to leave Tibet to the Tibetans. I prayed for calm. At the same time I realised that whatever my own personal feelings might be, there was no question of my going over to the Chinese headquarters that evening. Accordingly, my Lord Chamberlain telephoned to pass on my regrets, adding, on my instructions, that I hoped normality would be restored very soon and that the crowds could be persuaded to disperse.

However, the crowd at the gates of the Norbulingka was determined not to move. As far as the people and their leaders were concerned, the life of the Dalai Lama was in danger from the Chinese and they would not leave until I gave a personal assurance that I would not go to the Chinese military headquarters that night. This I did, via one of my officials. But it was not enough. They then demanded that I should never go to the camp. Again they were given my assurance, at which point most of the leaders left and went into the city, where further demonstrations were held; but many of the people outside the Norbulingka remained. Unfortunately, they did not realise that their continued presence constituted a far greater threat than if they had gone away.

That same day, I sent three of my most senior ministers to meet with General Tan Kuan-sen. When eventually they reached his headquarters, they found that Ngabo Ngawang Jigme was already there. At first the Chinese were polite. But when the General arrived he was in an ill-concealed rage. He and two other senior officers harangued the Tibetans for several hours about the treachery of the 'imperialist rebels', adding the accusation that the Tibetan Government had been secretly organising agitation against the Chinese authorities. Furthermore, it had defied the orders of the Chinese and refused to disarm the 'rebels' in Lhasa. They could now expect drastic measures to be taken to crush this opposition.

When they reported back to me that evening in my audience-room at the Norbulingka, I realised that the Chinese were issuing

an ultimatum. Meanwhile, at about six o'clock, around seventy junior government officials, together with the remaining popular leaders and members of my personal bodyguard, held a meeting outside the Jewel Park and endorsed a declaration denouncing the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement', adding that Tibet no longer recognised Chinese authority. When I heard of this, I sent a message saying that it was the duty of the leaders to reduce the existing tension and not to aggravate it. But my advice seemed to fall on ears that could not hear.

Later that same evening a letter arrived from General Tan Kuan-sen suggesting, in suspiciously moderate tones, that I move to his headquarters for my own safety. I was amazed at his effrontery. There was no question of doing any such thing. However, in order to try to buy time, I wrote him a conciliatory reply.

The next day, 11 March, the crowd leaders announced to the Government that they would post guards outside the Cabinet office, which was situated within the outer wall of the Norbulingka. This was to prevent any ministers from leaving the palace grounds. They feared that if they did not take the law into their own hands the Government might be forced into a compromise by the Chinese authorities. The *Kashag* in turn held a meeting with these leaders and requested them to call off the demonstration as it was in danger of precipitating an open confrontation.

At first, the leaders showed willingness to listen, but then two more letters arrived from General Tan Kuan-sen. One of these was addressed to me, the other to the *Kashag*. To the former, which was similar to the first, I again replied politely, agreeing that there were dangerous elements within the crowd which sought to undermine relations between Tibet and China. I also agreed that it might be a good idea if, for my safety, I went to his headquarters. (But then again it might not.)

In his other letter, the General ordered the ministers to instruct the crowd to take down the barricades that had been erected on the road outside Lhasa that led to China. Unfortunately, this had a calamitous effect. It seemed to the crowd leaders that, by saying they wanted these removed, the Chinese were making a clear

indication that they planned to bring in reinforcements which would be used to attack the Dalai Lama. They refused.

On hearing this, I decided that I must speak to these men myself. I did so, explaining that there was a serious danger that Chinese troops would use force to dispel the crowd if people did not leave very soon. Evidently my entreaty was partially successful, as afterwards they announced that they would move to Shöl, the village at the foot of the Potala, where many angry demonstrations were subsequently held. But the majority of the people outside the Norbulingka remained.

It was at around this point that I consulted the Nechung oracle, which was hurriedly summoned. Should I stay or should I try to escape? What was I to do? The oracle made it clear that I should stay and keep open the dialogue with the Chinese. For once, I was unsure of whether this really was the best course of action. I was reminded of Lukhangwa's remark about the gods lying when they too became desperate. So I spent the afternoon performing *Mo*, another form of divination. The result was identical.

The next days passed in a dizzying, frightening blur. I began to receive reports of a Chinese military build-up and the mood of the crowd grew almost hysterical. I consulted the oracle a second time, but his advice was the same as before. Then, on the 16th, I received a third and final letter from the General, together with an enclosure from Ngabo. General Tan's letter was much along the lines of his last two. Ngabo's, on the other hand, made clear what I and everyone else had dimly concluded, namely that the Chinese were planning to attack the crowd and shell the Norbulingka. He wanted me to indicate on a map where I would be – so that the artillery men could be briefed to aim off whichever building I marked. It was a horrifying moment as the truth sank in. Not only was my own life in danger, but the lives of thousands upon thousands of my people now seemed certain to be lost. If only they could be persuaded to go away, to return to their homes. Surely they could see that they had demonstrated to the Chinese the strength of their feelings? But it was no use. They were in such a pitch of fury against these unwelcome foreigners with their

brutal methods that nothing could move them. They would stay till the end and die keeping guard over their Precious Protector.

Reluctantly, I set about replying to Ngabo and General Tan, saying something along the lines that I was dismayed by the disgraceful behaviour of reactionary elements amongst the population of Lhasa. I assured them that I still thought it a good idea that I should move to the sanctuary of the Chinese headquarters, but that it was very difficult just at the moment; and that I hoped they too would have the patience to sit out the disturbances. Anything to buy time! After all, the crowd could not stay put indefinitely. I took care not to say where I was in the hope that this lack of knowledge would cause uncertainty and delay.

Having dispatched my replies, I was at a loss as to what to do next. The following day, I again sought the counsel of the oracle. To my astonishment, he shouted, 'Go! Go! Tonight!' The medium, still in his trance, then staggered forward and, snatching up some paper and a pen, wrote down, quite clearly and explicitly, the route that I should take out of the Norbulingka, down to the last Tibetan town on the Indian border. His directions were not what might have been expected. That done, the medium, a young monk named Lobsang Jigme, collapsed in a faint, signifying that Dorje Drakden had left his body. Just then, as if to reinforce the oracle's instructions, two mortar shells exploded in the marsh outside the northern gate of the Jewel Park.

Looking back on this event at a distance of more than thirty-one years, I am certain that Dorje Drakden had known all along that I must leave Lhasa on the 17th, but he did not say so for fear of word getting out. If no plans were made, nobody could find out about them.

I did not begin preparations for my escape immediately, however. First I wanted to confirm the oracle's decision, which I did by performing *Mo* once more. The answer agreed with the oracle, even though the odds against making a successful break seemed terrifyingly high. Not only was the crowd refusing to let anyone into or out of the palace grounds without first searching and interrogating them, but also Ngabo's letter made it clear that the

Chinese had already considered the possibility that I might try to escape. They must have taken precautions. Yet the supernatural counsels fitted in with my own reasoning: I was convinced that leaving was the only thing I could do to make the crowd disperse. If I was no longer inside, there could be no reason for people to remain. I therefore decided to accept the advice.

Because the situation was so desperate, I realised that I should tell as few people as possible of my decision and at first informed only my Lord Chamberlain and the *Chikyab Kenpo*. They then had the task of making preparations for a party to leave the palace that night, but without anyone knowing who would be amongst it. At the same time as we discussed how they were to go about this, we decided on the composition of the escape party. I would take with me only my closest advisors, including my two tutors, and those members of my immediate family who were present.

Later that afternoon, my tutors and the four members of the *Kashag* left the palace hidden under a tarpaulin in the back of a lorry; in the evening, my mother, Tenzin Choegyal and Tsering Dolma went out, disguised, on the pretext of going to a nunnery on the south side of the Kyichu river. I then summoned the popular leaders and told them of my plan, stressing the need not only for maximum co-operation (which I knew was assured), but also for absolute secrecy. I was certain that the Chinese would have spies amongst the crowd. When these men had gone, I wrote them a letter explaining my reasons for leaving and begging them not to open fire except in self-defence, trusting that they would relay this message to the people. It was to be delivered next day.

At nightfall, I went for the last time to the shrine dedicated to Mahakala, my personal protector divinity. As I entered the room through its heavy, creaking door, I paused for a moment to take in what I saw before me. A number of monks sat chanting prayers at the base of a large statue of the Protector. There was no electric light in the room, only the glow of dozens of votive butter lamps set in rows of golden and silver dishes. Numerous frescoes covered the walls. A small offering of *tsampa* sat on a plate on the altar. A server, his face half in shadow, was bending over a large urn from

which he was ladling out butter for the lamps. No one looked up, although I knew that my presence must have been noticed. To my right, one of the monks took up his cymbals, whilst another put a horn to his lips and blew a long, mournful note. The cymbals clashed together and were held, vibrating. Its sound was comforting.

I went forward and presented a *kata*, a length of white silk, to the divinity. This is the traditional Tibetan gesture on departure and signifies not only propitiation, but also implies the intention of return. For a moment I lingered in silent prayer. The monks would now suspect that I was going, but I was assured of their silence. Before leaving the room, I sat down for a few minutes and read from the Buddha's *sutras*, stopping at the one which talks of the need to 'develop confidence and courage'.

On leaving, I instructed someone to dim the lights throughout the remainder of the building before going downstairs, where I found one of my dogs. I patted it and was glad that it had never been very friendly with me. Our parting was not too difficult. I was much more sad to be leaving behind my bodyguards and sweepers. I then went outside into the chill March air. At the main entrance to the building was a landing with steps running off either side down to the ground. I walked round it, pausing on the far side to visualise reaching India safely. On coming back to the door, I visualised returning to Tibet.

At a few minutes before ten o'clock, now wearing unfamiliar trousers and a long, black coat, I threw a rifle over my right shoulder and, rolled up, an old *thangka* that had belonged to the Second Dalai Lama over my left. Then, slipping my glasses into my pocket, I stepped outside. I was very frightened. I was joined by two soldiers, who silently escorted me to the gate in the inner wall, where I was met by the *Kusun Depon*. With them, I groped my way across the park, hardly able to see a thing. On reaching the outer wall, we joined up with *Chikyab Kenpo*, who, I could just make out, was armed with a sword. He spoke to me in a low, reassuring voice. I was to keep by him at all costs. Going through the gate, he announced boldly to the people gathered there that

he was undertaking a routine tour of inspection. With that, we were allowed to pass through. No further words were spoken.

I could sense the presence of a great mass of humanity as I stumbled on, but they did not take any notice of us and, after a few minutes' walk, we were once more alone. We had successfully negotiated our way through the crowd, but now there were the Chinese to deal with. The thought of being captured terrified me. For the first time in my life I was truly afraid – not so much for myself but for the millions of people who put their faith in me. If I was caught, all would be lost. There was also some danger that we could be mistaken for Chinese soldiers by freedom fighters unaware of what was happening.

Our first obstacle was the tributary of the Kyichu river that I used to visit as a small child, until forbidden to do so by Tathag Rinpoché. To cross it, we had to use stepping-stones, which I found extremely difficult to negotiate without my glasses. More than once I almost lost my balance. We then made our way to the banks of the Kyichu itself. Just before reaching it, we came across a large group of people. The Lord Chamberlain spoke briefly with their leaders and then we passed on to the river-bank. Several coracles were waiting for us, together with a small party of ferry-men.

The crossing went smoothly, although I was certain that every splash of oars would draw down machine-gun fire on to us. There were many tens of thousands of PLA stationed in and around Lhasa at that time and it was inconceivable that they would not have patrols out. On the other side, we met up with a party of freedom fighters who were waiting with some ponies. Here we were also joined by my mother, my brother and sister and my tutors. We then paused to wait for my senior officials, who were following, to join us. Whilst we did so, we took the opportunity to exchange, in highly charged whispers, remarks about the iniquitous behaviour of the Chinese which had driven us to this pass. I also put my glasses back on – I could bear sightlessness no longer – but then almost wished I hadn't as I could now make out the torchlight of PLA sentries guarding the garrison that lay only a

few hundred yards from where we stood. Fortunately, the moon was obscured by low cloud and visibility was poor.

As soon as the others arrived, we set off towards the hill and the mountain pass, called Che-La, that separates the Lhasa valley from the Tsangpo valley. At around three o'clock in the morning, we stopped at a simple farm house, the first of many to provide us with shelter over the next few weeks. But we did not remain long and after only a little while left to continue the trek up to the pass, which we reached at around eight o'clock. Not long before we reached it, the first light of day dawned and we saw to our amusement the result of our haste. There had been a mix-up with the ponies, their harnesses and their riders. Because the monastery that had provided the animals had had almost no warning, and because of the dark, the best of them had been fitted with the worst saddles and given to the wrong people, whereas some of the oldest and shaggiest mules wore the finest harnesses and were being ridden by the most senior officials!

At the top of the 16,000-foot pass – Che-La means Sandy Pass – the groom who was leading my pony stopped and turned it round, telling me that this was the last opportunity on the journey for a look at Lhasa. The ancient city looked serene as ever as it lay spread out far below. I prayed for a few minutes before dismounting and running on foot down the sandy slopes that gave the place its name. We then rested again for a short while before pushing on towards the banks of the Tsangpo, which we reached finally not long before noon. There was only one place to cross it, by ferry, and we had to hope that the PLA had not reached it first. They had not.

On the far side, we stopped in a small village whose inhabitants turned out to greet me, many weeping. We were now on the fringes of some of Tibet's most difficult country: an area with only a few remote settlements. It was a region that the freedom fighters had made their own. From here on, I knew we were invisibly surrounded by hundreds of guerrilla warriors who had been warned of our impending arrival and whose job it was to protect us as we travelled.

It would have been difficult for the Chinese to follow us, but if they had information on our whereabouts it was possible that they might calculate our intended route and mobilise forces ahead to try to intercept us. So for our immediate protection an escort of about three hundred and fifty Tibetan soldiers had been assembled, along with a further fifty or so irregulars. The escape party itself had by now grown to about one hundred people.

Almost everyone but myself was heavily armed, including even the man appointed as my personal cook, who carried an enormous bazooka and wore a belt hung with its deadly shells. He was one of the young men trained by the CIA. So eager was he to use his magnificent and terrible-looking weapon that, at one point, he lay down and fired off several shots at what he claimed looked like an enemy position. But it took such a long time to reload that I felt sure he would have been made short work of by a real enemy. Altogether, it was not an impressive performance.

There was another of these CIA operatives amongst the party, a radio operator who was apparently in touch with his headquarters throughout the journey. Exactly whom he was in contact with, I do not know to this day. I only know that he was equipped with a Morse-key transmitter.

That night we stopped at a monastery called Ra-Me, where I wrote a hurried letter to the Panchen Lama telling him of my escape and advising him to join me in India if he could. I had not heard from him since the middle of winter, when he had written to offer his good wishes for the year ahead. In a separate, secret note he had also said he thought that, with the situation deteriorating throughout the country, we needed to formulate a strategy for the future. This was the first indication he had given of being no longer in the thrall of our Chinese masters. Unfortunately, my message never reached him and he remained in Tibet.

The next pass was called Sabo-La, which we reached two or three days later. At the top, it was very cold and snowing a blizzard. I began to be deeply worried about some of my companions. Although I was young and fit, some of the older ones amongst my entourage found the going very difficult. But we dared not slacken

the pace as we were still in grave danger of being intercepted by Chinese forces. Particularly we were in danger of being caught in a pincer movement by troops stationed at Gyantse and in the Kongpo region.

At first, it was my intention to halt at Lhuntse Dzong, not far from the Indian border, where I would repudiate the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement', re-establish my Government as the rightful administration of all Tibet, and try to open negotiations with the Chinese. However, on about the fifth day, we were overtaken by a posse of horsemen who brought terrible news. Just over forty-eight hours after my departure, the Chinese had begun to shell the Norbulingka and to machine-gun the defenceless crowd, which was still in place. My worst fears had come true. I realised that it would be impossible to negotiate with people who behaved in this cruel and criminal fashion. There was nothing for it now but for us to get as far away as possible, though India still lay many days' journey distant, with several more high mountain passes in between.

When eventually we reached Lhuntse Dzong, after more than a week's travel, we paused for only two nights, just long enough for me formally to repudiate the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' and to announce the formation of my own Government, the only legally constituted authority in the land. Over a thousand people attended the ceremony of consecration. I wanted very much to stay longer, but reports informed us that there were Chinese troop movements not far away. So reluctantly we prepared to move on to the Indian border, which now lay just sixty miles away in a straight line, though actually about double that on the ground. There was still another range of mountains to cross and it would take several more days to cover the distance, especially as our ponies were already worn out and there was very little fodder to give them. They would need frequent halts to conserve their energy. Before we left, I sent on a small party of the fittest men, who were to reach India as quickly as possible, find the nearest officials and warn them that I was planning to seek asylum there.

From Lhuntse Dzong we passed to the small village of Jhora and from there to the Karpo pass, the last before the border. Just as we were nearing the highest point of the track we received a bad shock. Out of nowhere, an aeroplane appeared and flew directly overhead. It passed quickly – too quickly for anyone to be able to see what markings it had – but not so fast that the people on board could have missed spotting us. This was not a good sign. If it was Chinese, as it probably was, there was a good chance that they now knew where we were. With this information they could return to attack us from the air, against which we had no protection. Whatever the identity of the aircraft, it was a forceful reminder that I was not safe anywhere in Tibet. Any misgivings I had about going into exile vanished with this realisation: India was our only hope.

A little later, the men I had sent on from Lhuntse Dzong returned with the news that the Indian Government had signalled its willingness to receive me. I was very relieved to hear this, as I had not wanted to set foot in India without permission.

I spent my last night in Tibet at a tiny village called Mangmang. No sooner had we reached this final outpost of the Land of Snows than it began to rain. This was on top of a week of appalling weather, which threw blizzards and snow glare at us by turns as we straggled along. We were all exhausted and it was the last thing that we needed, but it continued torrentially throughout the night. To make matters worse, my tent leaked and no matter where I dragged my bedding I could not escape the water which ran in rivulets down the inside. The result was that the fever I had been fighting off for the past few days developed overnight into a case of full-blown dysentery.

The following morning, I was too ill to continue, so we remained where we were. My companions moved me to a small house nearby, but it provided little more protection than my tent. Moreover, I was oppressed by the stench of cows that rose from the ground floor to where I lay above. That day, I heard on the small portable radio we had with us a report on All-India Radio saying that I was en route to India, but that I had fallen off my horse and was badly

injured. This cheered me up rather, as it was one misfortune that I had managed to avoid, though I knew my friends would be concerned.

Next day, I decided to move on. I now had the difficult task of saying goodbye to the soldiers and freedom fighters who had escorted me all the way from Lhasa, and who were now about to turn and face the Chinese. There was one official too who decided to remain. He said that he did not think that he could be of much use in India, therefore it would be better to stay and fight. I really admired his determination and courage.

After bidding these people a tearful farewell, I was helped on to the broad back of a *dzomo*, for I was still too ill to ride a horse. And it was on this humble form of transport that I left my native land.

A Desperate Year

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WE MUST HAVE BEEN a pitiful sight to the handful of Indian guards that met us at the border – eighty travellers, physically exhausted and mentally wretched from our ordeal. I was delighted, however, that an official I knew from my visit two years earlier was there to rendezvous with us. He explained that his orders were to escort me to Bomdila, a large town that lay a further week's travel away, for rest.

We finally reached it some three weeks after leaving Lhasa, though it seemed like an aeon. On arrival, I was greeted by my old liaison officer and interpreter, Mr Menon and Sonam Topgyal Kazi respectively, one of whom handed me a telegram from the Prime Minister:

'My colleagues and I welcome you and send greetings on your safe arrival in India. We shall be happy to afford the necessary facilities to you, your family and entourage to reside in India. The people of India, who hold you in great veneration, will no doubt accord their traditional respect to your personage. Kind regards to you. Nehru.'

I remained in Bomdila, where I was looked after very well by the family of the local District Commissioner, for about ten days. At the end of which, I was fully recovered from my dysentery. Then, early on 18 April 1959, I was taken by jeep to a road camp called Foothills, where a small guard of honour was formed up on either side of a makeshift carpet of canvas leading to the camp overseer's house, my base for the morning. Inside, I was given a breakfast that included fresh bananas – of which I ate too many,

with unfortunate consequences to my digestive system – and briefed by Mr Menon about the arrangements that had been made by the Indian Government on my behalf.

That afternoon, I was to be taken to Tezpur, and from there began the journey to Mussoorie, a hill station not far from Delhi, where a house had been procured for me. A special train to take us the 1,500-mile distance had already been laid on.

As I left the building at Foothills, and climbed into a big red car for the thirty-mile drive to the railway station, I noticed large numbers of cameramen. It was explained to me that these were representatives of the international press. They had come to report on the 'story of the century'. I should expect to see many more of them on arrival in the city.

When we reached Tezpur I was taken directly to the Circuit House, where many hundreds of messages, telegrams and letters awaited me, all sending greetings and good wishes from people the world over. For a few moments I was lost in gratitude, but the exigencies of the present were almost overwhelming. The most pressing requirement, I felt, was to prepare a short statement to give to the many people waiting for some word from me to send back to their newspapers. In it, I gave an outline in straightforward and carefully moderate terms of the history I have related in these chapters. That done, and after a light lunch, we left for our train, which was due to depart at one o'clock.

On the way, hundreds if not thousands of people pressed around my convoy, waving and shouting greetings. This continued to happen throughout the whole journey to Mussoorie. At some points, the tracks themselves had to be cleared of well-wishers. News travels swiftly amongst rural communities and it seemed that no one was unaware of my presence on board that train. Thousands upon thousands of people turned out and shouted their welcome: '*Dalai Lama Ki Jai! Dalai Lama Zinda-bad!*' ('Hail to the Dalai Lama! Long live the Dalai Lama!') It was very moving. At three major cities en route, Siliguri, Benares and Lucknow, I was obliged to leave my carriage and address huge, impromptu meetings of flower-throwing well-wishers. The whole journey was

like an extraordinary dream. Thinking back on it, I am immensely grateful to the people of India for their effusive demonstration of goodwill at that time.

The train finally pulled in at Dehra Dun station after several days of travel. Again, there was a large welcome for me. From there we drove up to Mussoorie, which was about an hour's drive. I was then taken to Birla House, a residence of one of India's leading industrial families, which had been requisitioned for my use by the Indian Government. There I was to stay until long-term plans could be made. As things turned out, it became my home for a year.

A day or so after my arrival, I heard of a New China News Agency report suggesting that because my Tezpur statement had been written in the third person it could not have been true. It went on to assert that I had been blatantly abducted and put under duress by 'rebels', and referred to my statement as 'a crude document, lame in reasoning, full of lies and loopholes'. This Chinese version of the story described the Tibetan people's uprising as having been organised by 'a reactionary upper-strata clique'. However, they explained, 'with the aid of the patriotic Tibetan monks and laymen, the People's Liberation Army completely crushed the rebellion. Primarily, this is because the Tibetan people are patriotic, support the Central People's Government, ardently love the People's Liberation Army and oppose the imperialists and traitors.' I therefore issued another brief communiqué confirming that the initial statement had been authorised by me.

On 24 April, Pandit Nehru himself arrived in Mussoorie. We talked together for over four hours, assisted by a single interpreter. I began by telling him everything that had happened since I had returned to Tibet – largely, as I reminded him, at his insistence. I went on to say that I had done just as he had suggested and dealt fairly and honestly with the Chinese, criticising them where necessary and trying hard to keep to the terms of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. I then explained that I had not originally intended to seek India's hospitality but that I had wanted to establish my Government at Lhuntse Dzong. Only the news from

Lhasa had changed my mind. At this point he became rather irritated. 'The Indian Government could not have recognised it even if you had,' he said. I began to get the impression that Nehru thought of me as a young person who needed to be scolded from time to time.

During other parts of our conversation he banged the table. 'How can this be?' he asked indignantly once or twice. However, I went on in spite of the growing evidence that he could be a bit of a bully. Finally, I told him very firmly that my main concern was twofold: 'I am determined to win independence for Tibet, but the immediate requirement is to put a stop to the bloodshed.' At this he could restrain himself no longer. 'That is not possible!' he said in a voice charged with emotion. 'You say you want independence and in the same breath you say you do not want bloodshed. Impossible!' His lower lip quivered with anger as he spoke.

I began to realise that the Prime Minister found himself in an extremely delicate and embarrassing position. In the Indian Parliament, another tense debate on the Tibetan question had followed the news of my escape from Lhasa. For years now, he had been criticised by many politicians over his handling of the situation. And now, it seemed to me, he was showing signs of a guilty conscience at having been so insistent that I return to Tibet in 1957.

Yet at the same time it was clear that Nehru wanted to protect India's friendly relations with China and was determined to adhere to the principles of the Panch Sheel memorandum, despite the Indian politician Acharya Kripalani's description of it as having been 'born in sin to put the seal of our approval on the destruction of an ancient nation'. He made it quite clear that the Government of India still could not contemplate taking issue with the Chinese over the question of Tibetan rights. For now, I should rest and not make any plans for the immediate future. We would have the opportunity for further discussions on other occasions. Hearing this, I began to realise that my future, and that of my people, was far less certain than I had imagined. Our meeting ended cordially

enough but, as the Prime Minister left, I experienced a profound feeling of disappointment.

It quickly became clear, however, that we were faced with more immediate problems than the question of Tibetan independence. No sooner had we arrived in Mussoorie than we started to receive reports of large numbers of refugees arriving not only in India but also in Bhutan. Immediately, I sent some of my officials to receive them at the camps hastily opened by the Indian Government.

From these new arrivals I learnt that, after their initial bombardment of the Norbulingka, the Chinese had turned their guns on to the Potala and the Jokhang, slaughtering and wounding thousands. Both buildings were badly damaged. The Chakpori Medical School was totally destroyed. No one knows how many people were killed during this onslaught, but a PLA document captured by Tibetan freedom fighters during the 1960s stated that between March 1959 and September 1960, 87,000 deaths through military action were recorded. (This figure does not include all those who died as a result of suicide, torture and starvation.)

As a result, countless thousands of my people tried to leave Tibet. Many died, either directly at the hands of the Chinese, or from wounds, malnutrition, cold and disease. Those who managed to escape across the border did so in a state of abject dereliction. And although there was food and shelter for them on arrival, the relentless Indian sun began to exact a pitiless toll from them. There were two main transit camps, one at Missamari, close to Tezpur, the other at Buxa Duar, a former British prisoner-of-war camp located close to the Bhutanese border in the north-east.

Both places were much lower than Mussoorie's elevation of 6,000 feet, so the heat was unmitigated. For although it can get quite hot in Tibet during summer, the air at the high altitude people were used to was extremely dry, whereas on the Indian plains the heat is accompanied by high levels of humidity. This was not just uncomfortable for the refugees but all too often fatal. Diseases which were unknown to Tibetans proliferated in this new environment. Thus, on top of the danger of death from injuries sustained whilst escaping from Tibet, there was also danger of

death from heat stroke and illnesses such as tuberculosis, which flourished under these conditions. Many succumbed.

Those of us who lived in Mussoorie were considerably more fortunate than the majority of our fellow countrymen and women. And because there were fans installed at Birla House, I suffered perhaps least of all – though the fans themselves did cause their own difficulties, I found. The tendency was to leave them on at night, which caused digestive problems. I was reminded of a proverb of one of my sweepers at the Potala: 'In the winter it is cold and you wrap up at night. But in the summer it is warm and you forget.'

Another small observation I made at this time was that hot weather encourages fruit eating, whereas when it is cold there is no such desire.

I had limited personal experience of the discomfort due to heat suffered by my fellow exiles on those occasions when I had cause to go down to the plains during those summer months. The first of these was in June, when I travelled to Delhi to call on the Prime Minister for discussions about the growing refugee population. Already there were 20,000 and the numbers were increasing on a daily basis.

I began by pleading for the new arrivals to be moved somewhere that the climate was less damaging than at Tezpur and Buxa Duar. They had arrived wearing long robes and heavy boots, completely ignorant of the imminent hot season. And although the first few thousand refugees to escape from the murderous hands of Tibet's 'liberators' were mostly men, many from Lhasa and surrounding districts, later whole families began to arrive. These people came principally from the border areas, where Chinese control was not yet absolute.

I impressed upon Nehru my conviction that the majority would die if they were left there. At first, he showed some signs of irritation. He said that I was asking too much. I must remember that India was a poor, developing country. But quickly his humanitarian instincts won him over. Already the *Kashag* had held discussions with Indian officials about a plan to employ the refugees

on road camps in northern India and now Nehru said that he would see to it that the arrangements were made as quickly as possible. This would then allow them to earn their keep and, at the same time, to be taken to a more suitable climate.

He then began to talk about the future education of the refugee children, quickly warming to the subject, so that in the end he was showing such interest that it was as if he considered the matter to be his own personal responsibility. He said that, since as far as he was concerned we would be guests of India for the foreseeable future, our children were our most precious resource. They should be well educated. And, in order to preserve Tibetan culture, it would be necessary to have separate schools for them. There should therefore be an independent Society for Tibetan Education within the Indian Ministry of Education. He added that the Indian Government would bear all the expenses for setting up the schools. (To this day, it continues to fund the greater part of our education programme.)

Finally, he cautioned me that, whilst it was very important that the children should be brought up with a thorough knowledge of their own history and culture, it was vital that they should be conversant with the ways of the modern world. I agreed wholeheartedly. For that reason, he said, we would be wise to use English as our medium of instruction, for 'it is the international language of the future'.

Our meeting was followed by lunch, at which point Nehru said he would call Dr Shrimali, the Education Minister. This gave us the opportunity to continue our discussion. Then, that same afternoon, the Prime Minister told me that the Government would announce the formation of the Society that very day. I was highly impressed with such a rapid response.

Over the years now, the people and Government of India have given an extraordinary amount to us Tibetan refugees, both in terms of financial assistance and in many other ways – this despite their own enormous economic difficulties. I doubt whether any other refugees have been so well treated by their hosts. It is always in my mind whenever the Tibetans have been compelled to ask

for more money that, in the meantime, hundreds of thousands of India's own children lack even basic education.

Yet in a way, it is only right that India should come to our aid. For Buddhism came to Tibet from India, along with many other important cultural influences. There is no doubt in my mind that she has a better claim on Tibet than China, whose influence was only ever slight. I often compare the relationship between India and Tibet with that between a teacher and a pupil. When the pupil gets him or herself into difficulty, it is the responsibility of the teacher to come to the pupil's assistance.

Not far behind the generosity of the Indian people has been that of many foreign relief organisations. Much of their assistance has been of a practical nature, especially in the fields of health and education. Also important has been their help in establishing handicraft and other work centres, which have provided meaningful employment for many people. The first were carpet-weaving workshops set up in Darjeeling, the tea-producing town high up on the border with Nepal, and at Dalhousie, not far from Dharamsala. Both were founded by the Indian Government towards the end of 1959. These then provided the model for several other such centres set up with assistance from the overseas agencies – some of whom continue their support to this day. Now, many years later, each of those organisations which were involved at the beginning of our exile have expressed full satisfaction with the progress made by the refugees under their guidance.

The positive way in which Tibetans have responded to the help given them is the best way for us to express our enormous gratitude. This is important, not least because I am conscious that much of the money donated to these agencies often comes from the pockets of people with quite limited resources themselves.

On returning to Mussoorie after this visit to Delhi, I felt that the time was now ripe for me to break my elected silence and, on 20 June, I held a press conference. There were still a great number of newspapermen in Mussoorie waiting to hear something from me. Although the 'story' was by now over two months old, a total

of 130 reporters attended, representing countries the world over.

I began by formally repudiating once more the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. I explained that, since China herself had broken the terms of her own 'Agreement', there could no longer be any legal basis for recognising it. I then elaborated on my original short statement and detailed some of the atrocities committed against the Tibetans. I was sure that people would realise that my story was nearer the truth than the incredible fiction put about by the Chinese. But although my latest statement received wide coverage, I had underestimated the power of an efficiently conducted public relations campaign such as the Chinese Government was able to carry out. Or perhaps I overestimated the willingness of mankind to face the truth about itself. I believe that it took first the evidence of the Cultural Revolution, then the sight of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre on its television screens before the world fully accepted the mendacity and barbarity of the Communist Chinese.

That same evening, a communiqué was issued on behalf of the Indian Government saying that it did not recognise the Dalai Lama's Government in Exile. I was at first a little surprised and hurt by this. I knew perfectly well that it did not support us politically, but such distancing seemed unnecessary. However, my wounded feelings quickly gave way to a sense of enormous gratitude as I saw, really for the first time, the true meaning of the word 'democracy'. The Indian Government vehemently opposed my point of view, but it did nothing to try to prevent me from expressing it, much less from holding it.

Likewise, there was no interference from Delhi over how I and the growing numbers of Tibetans conducted our lives. In accordance with popular requests, I had begun to give weekly audiences in the grounds of Birla House. This gave me the opportunity to meet a variety of people and tell them about the real situation in Tibet. It also helped me begin the process of removing the protocol which did so much to separate the Dalai Lama from his people. I had a strong feeling that we should not cling to old practices that were no longer appropriate. As I often reminded people, we were now refugees.

To this end, I insisted that all formality should be deliberately reduced and made clear that I no longer wanted people to perform the old courtesies. I felt this was especially important when dealing with foreigners. They would be much more likely to respond to genuine worth if they found it. It is very easy to put others off by remaining aloof. So I was determined to be entirely open, to show everything and not to hide behind etiquette. In this way I hoped that people would relate to me as one human being to another.

I also stipulated that whenever I received anybody, he or she should sit on a chair of equal height, rather than one lower than mine as was customary. At first, even I found this rather difficult as I did not have much self-confidence, but it grew from then on. And despite the misgivings of some of my older advisors, I think the only people who were discomfited by these principles were occasional new arrivals from Tibet who did not know that the Dalai Lama no longer lived the way they were used to.

Life at Birla House was hardly conducive to formality anyway. It was neither especially grand nor large and at times it became quite crowded. I shared it with my mother as well as my household, and the remainder of my officials lived very close by. This was the first time in my life that I had seen so much of my mother. I very much enjoyed her company.

In addition to reducing formality, our tragedy also gave me the opportunity greatly to simplify my own personal life. In Lhasa I had had many possessions which were of little use, but it was very difficult to give them away. Now, I possessed almost nothing and I found it much easier to pass on things that were given to me if they could be of use to my fellow refugees.

In the field of administration, too, I was able to make radical changes. For example, I saw at this time to the creation of various new Tibetan government departments. These included Offices of Information, Education, Rehabilitation, Security, Religious Affairs and Economic Affairs. I also particularly encouraged women to take part in government. I reminded people that selection for important positions should never be based on the question of gender, only on the quality and aptitude of the candidate. As I

have already mentioned, women always played an important part in Tibetan society and today there are many who hold key posts in the Tibetan Government in Exile.

I returned to Delhi during September. By this time, I was somewhat easier in my mind about the refugees. Their numbers had by now grown to almost thirty thousand, but Nehru was true to his word and already many had been removed to road camps in the hills of northern India. My main aim now was to do what I could to have the question of Tibet's right to independence raised at the United Nations. Once again I began my visit by calling on the Prime Minister. We spent some time discussing a proposal to transfer some of the new arrivals to the south of India. He had already written to the heads of several Indian states asking whether any would be prepared to make land over to us Tibetans.

After expressing great satisfaction to hear that more than one offer had been made, I mentioned my plan to try to have a hearing at the UN. At this, Nehru began to show signs of exasperation. Since neither Tibet nor China were member states, he said, it was highly unlikely that I would succeed. And even if I did, it would not have much effect. I replied that I was aware of the difficulties, but that I simply wanted the world to keep Tibet in mind. It was vital that my people were not forgotten in their misery. 'The way to keep the Tibetan question alive is not through the UN, but through the proper education of your children. But it's up to you. You live in a free country,' he said.

I had already written to the Governments of many countries and now I had meetings with the Ambassadors of several. I found this a very trying ordeal. I was still only twenty-four, and my experience of dealing with high-ranking officials was limited to what I had gained during my visit to China and my few talks with Nehru and his colleagues. Nevertheless, it paid off to the extent that some were very sympathetic and gave me advice on how to proceed, and all promised to inform their Governments of my requests for support. In the end, the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Ireland sponsored a draft resolution which was debated by the UN General Assembly during October. It was

passed in our favour in a vote split forty-five for and nine against, with twenty-six abstentions. India was one of the abstainers.

Also during this particular visit to the capital, I had meetings with a number of sympathetic Indian politicians, including Jaya Prakash Naryan who, true to his commitment back in 1957, had set up a Tibet Support Committee. There was now, he felt, a good chance of persuading the Government to change its stance on Tibet. His enthusiasm was infectious and deeply moving, though instinctively I knew that Pandit Nehru would never change his mind. Another welcome development was news that the International Commission of Jurists, an independent organisation dedicated to upholding justice around the world, had recently published a report on the legal status of Tibet that vindicated our position entirely. The Commission, which had taken up our case early in the year, was now planning to conduct a full-scale enquiry.

A month later, after returning to Mussoorie, I received a welcome boost to morale when the Afro-Asian Committee met in Delhi. It devoted almost the whole of its business to discussing the Tibetan issue. The majority of its delegates were from countries that had themselves suffered from colonial oppression, so naturally they were well disposed towards Tibet. They saw us in the same position as they themselves had been before they won their independence. I received reports of their unanimous support with feelings of great joy and optimism and began to feel that something positive must surely come of all this. But alas, deep down it was clear to me that the Prime Minister was right. We Tibetans must not think in terms of an early return to our country. Instead we must concentrate on building a strong community in exile so that when the time eventually came, we would be able to resume our lives back home transformed by our experience.

The offers of land Nehru had mentioned seemed to hold the best prospect of allowing us to do this. Three thousand acres near to Mysore in southern India were immediately available if we wanted them, but, generous though this was, I was at first hesitant to accept. I had visited the area whilst on pilgrimage during my first visit to the country, and knew it to be quiet and lightly

populated. However, it is considerably hotter there than it is in the north and I felt that the conditions would likely be too harsh. Furthermore, with my administration located in Dharamsala, I feared the distance was too great.

On the other hand, given our present situation, I realised it was necessary to think in terms of settling semi-permanently in India. Only then would it be possible to begin an education programme and take steps to ensure the cultural continuity of the Tibetan people. In the end, I concluded that these considerations outweighed the geographical and psychological problems, and I gratefully accepted the land. A first batch of 666 settlers would leave in the New Year of 1960 to begin the work of making it habitable. On the basis of one acre per refugee, the eventual aim was to establish a community for 3,000.

Towards the end of 1959 came news of two organisations, the Central Relief Committee, headed by Acharya Kripalani, and the American Emergency Committee for Tibetan Refugees, that had been set up specifically to help us. These were later followed by other similarly dedicated agencies in other countries which, between them, provided invaluable assistance.

Meanwhile, I began to receive visits from a number of interesting people. One of these was the same Indian monk that I had met in Dromo when he was travelling with a relic of the Lord Buddha. I was delighted to see him again. He was very scholarly and had a particular interest in socio-economics. In the time since we had last met, he had expended much time and energy in trying to synthesise Marxist ideology with the spiritual principles of Buddhism. This interested me greatly. I was convinced that, because so much of Asia, from the Thai border up to Siberia, whose native faith was Buddhism, was now suffering terribly as a result of Marxism's hostility to religion, such work was vital.

Also at around this time, I received a visit from a left-leaning Sinhalese monk. At the end of his stay in Mussoorie, my new friend invited me to Sri Lanka. This was somewhere I very much wanted to go to, not least because it would give me the opportunity

to see the most important of all relics, the Buddha's tooth. However, some months later, when the time approached for me to make the journey, I received a forceful indication of how uncertain is the status of a refugee. The Sri Lankan Government sent a communication regretting that my visit would have to be indefinitely postponed as there had been 'unforeseen developments'. These turned out to have originated from Peking. Again I was reminded of the power of brothers and sisters in high places to stop even religious activities if they chose to.

The urgency of opening a meaningful dialogue with the Chinese was brought home to me when I received a deputation from some other victims of Communist expansionism. They were from East Turkestan, which had been overrun by China in 1949. We had much to talk about and spent many hours relating our experiences to one another. It transpired that the East Turkestani refugees were considerably more numerous than us and one of their leaders was a lawyer. This was at a time when there was not a single practitioner of allopathic medicine amongst the entire Tibetan population, let alone a qualified lawyer. We discussed at length the various ways we could carry on the struggle for freedom in our countries. Finally, we agreed to keep in close touch, which we do to this day, although somehow the Tibetan cause has always attracted more publicity than theirs.

In December, I made the six-hour journey down to Delhi once more, this time as the first leg of a new pilgrimage. I wanted to spend more time at the places I had visited at the beginning of 1957. On my way I called on the Prime Minister once more. I was somewhat anxious of what he might have to say to me on account of the UN resolution and I half expected him to be annoyed. In fact, he congratulated me warmly. I began to see that, despite his occasional heavy-handedness, he was a man of great magnanimity. And once again, I was reminded of the meaning of the word 'democracy'. Even though I had rejected his opinion, there was no change whatever in his attitude towards the Tibetans. As a result, I felt more disposed than ever to listen to him. This was exactly contrary to my experience in China. Nehru did not smile

much. He would sit quietly listening with that tremulous lower lip protruding slightly, before making his reply, which would always be frank and honest. Above all, he gave me complete freedom to follow my own conscience. The Chinese, on the other hand, had always been full of smiles and deceit.

I also saw the Indian President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, once more. I was his guest at Rastrapathi Bhavan, along with a Jain, Acharya Tulsi, towards whom I developed strong feelings of respect. As I had been on our first meeting back in 1956, I was deeply impressed by the President's humility. His demeanour was something quite extraordinary and I was actually moved to tears. He seemed to me like a true Bodhisattva. The last time I saw him was in the garden of his residence. I went down very early in the morning for a walk and found that he was outside too, an old man, hunched and magnificent, in a large, black wheelchair.

From Delhi I proceeded to Bodh Gaya. Whilst there, I received a deputation of sixty or more Tibetan refugees who were also making a pilgrimage. A very moving moment followed when their leaders came to me and pledged their lives in the continuing struggle for a free Tibet. After that, for the first time in this life, I ordained a group of 162 young Tibetan novices as *bikshus*. I felt greatly privileged to be able to do this at the Tibetan monastery which stands within sight of the Mahabodhi temple, next to the Bodhi Tree under which the Buddha finally attained Enlightenment.

I then travelled to Sarnath and the Deer Park, where the Buddha had preached his first sermon. With me I had a small retinue of staff, including Ling Rinpoché, Trijang Rinpoché and, of course, my Masters of the Robes, the Ritual and the Kitchen. On arrival, I found that something like two thousand Tibetan refugees, newly arrived through Nepal, had assembled, knowing that I planned to give a teaching. They were in very poor condition, but I could see that they were facing their hardship with great spirit. Tibetans are indefatigable traders and already they had set up stalls. Some were selling a few valuables they had managed to bring with them, others were selling old clothes. Many sold just tea. I was much

encouraged by their vigour in the face of such suffering. Each person could have told a tale of desperate hardship and cruelty, yet here they were making the best of what little life had to offer them.

This first week-long teaching in the Deer Park was a wonderful event for me. It meant a great deal to be able to give it in the very place where the Buddha himself had taught 2,500 years before. During the course of it, I concentrated on the positive aspects of our ordeal. I reminded everyone of the Buddha's own words when he said that suffering is the first step towards liberation. There is an old Tibetan saying, too, that 'pain is what you measure pleasure by'.

Shortly after returning to Mussoorie, I learned that the Indian Government had plans to move me to permanent accommodation at a place called Dharamsala. This was unexpected news and quite alarming. I found Dharamsala on the map and discovered that it was another hill station, like Mussoorie, but in a considerably more remote location. On further investigation I was told that, unlike Mussoorie, which was only a few hours from Delhi, Dharamsala was a whole day's journey from the capital. I began to have some suspicion that the Indian Government was now trying to hide us away somewhere without good communications in the hope that we Tibetans would disappear from the sight of the outside world.

I therefore requested that I be allowed to send a Tibetan Government official to Dharamsala to see whether it was really suitable for our needs. My plea was heard and I sent a member of the *Kashag*, J. T. Kundeling, to reconnoitre the spot. When he came back after a week's absence, he announced that 'Dharamsala water is better than Mussoorie milk'. So we made preparations to shift camp without delay.

In the meantime, I made the first of many visits to the northern provinces, where thousands of my people were now engaged on road building. I was heartbroken when I saw them. Children, women and men were all working side by side in gangs: former

nuns, farmers, monks, officials, all thrown together. They had to endure a full day's hard physical toil under a mighty sun, followed by nights crammed into tiny tents. Nobody was yet properly acclimatised to the conditions and even though it was a bit cooler than in the transit camps, heat and humidity still exacted a frightening toll. The air was fetid and thick with mosquitoes. As a result, sickness was universal and often fatal, thanks to the already weakened state of people's constitutions. Worse still, the work itself was quite risky. Much of it was done on steep mountain-sides and the dynamite they used claimed its own share of casualties.

Even today, quite a few old people carry scars from this terrible labour and are maimed and crippled. And although now the fruit of their labours is clearly visible, at the time there were moments when the whole venture seemed pointless. It took only one fierce downpour of rain to wash away their efforts in a slick of red mud. Yet for all this, despite their desperate situation, the refugees showed me deep, personal respect and listened closely when I said that it was vital for us to remain optimistic. I was very moved.

These first visits to the road camps made me aware of a new problem, however. The children of the roadworkers were suffering badly from malnutrition and their mortality rate was very high. So I contacted the Indian Government, which hurriedly organised a new transit camp dedicated specifically to their needs. At the same time, an initial batch of fifty children was sent to Mussoorie, where the first of our schools had been set up.

On 1 February 1960, the first settlers arrived at Bylakuppe in Mysore state. I heard later that when they saw the land, many of the refugees broke down and cried. The task before them seemed so immense. They had been supplied with tents and basic equipment, but apart from this, their only resource was such determination as they could bring to bear.

Just over a month later, on 10 March, just before leaving for Dharamsala with the eighty or so officials who comprised the Tibetan Government in Exile, I began what is now a tradition by making a statement on the anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising. On this first occasion, I stressed the need for my people

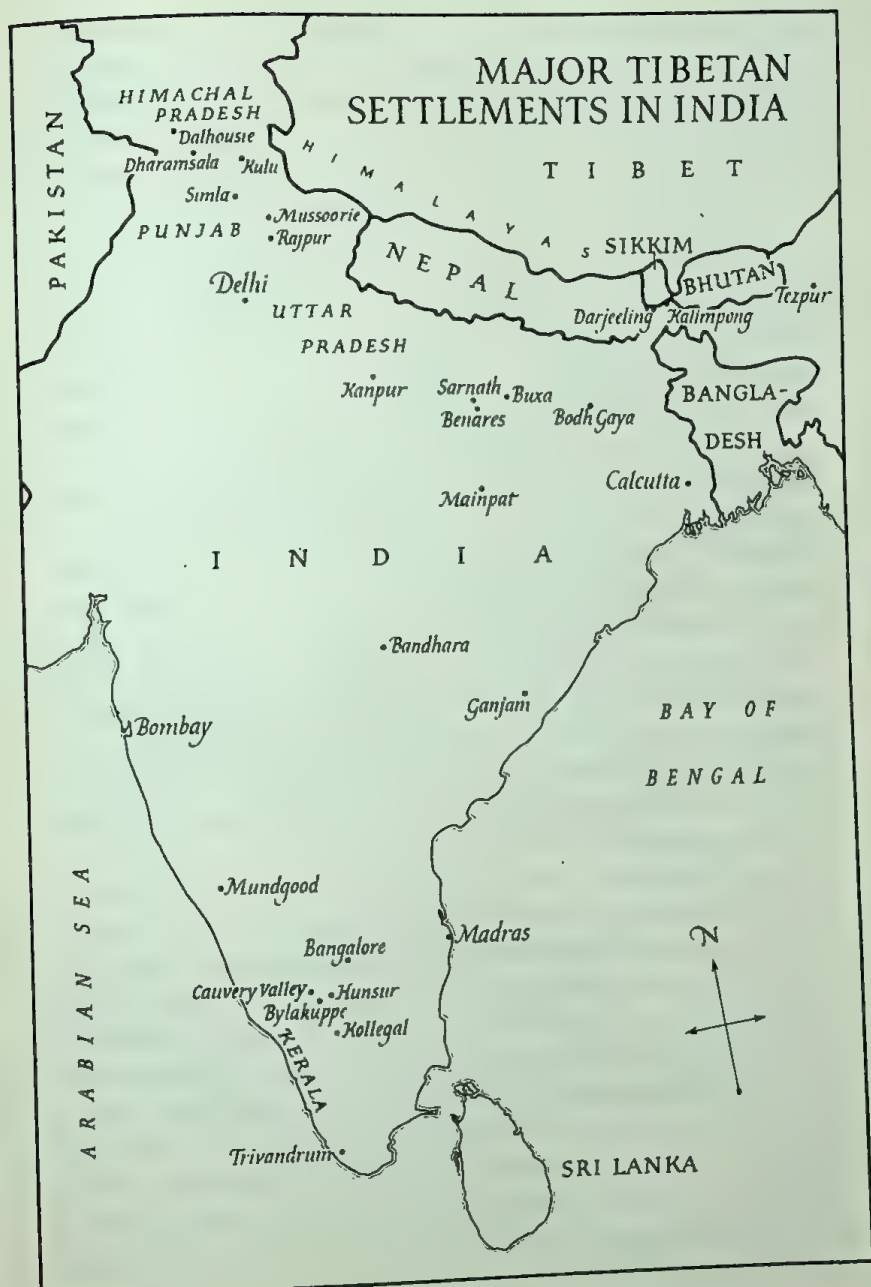
to take a long-term view of the situation in Tibet. For those of us in exile, I said that our priority must be resettlement and the continuity of our cultural traditions. As to the future, I stated my belief that, with Truth, Justice and Courage as our weapons, we Tibetans would eventually prevail in regaining freedom for Tibet.

100,000 Refugees

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THE JOURNEY to Dharamsala was by a combination of overnight train and motorcade. Together with my entourage, I left Mussoorie on 29 April 1960 and arrived at Pathankot station in Himachal Pradesh the following day. I well remember the drive that followed our train ride. After about an hour on the road I saw white peaks towering high up in the far distance. We were headed straight for them. On the way we passed through some of the most beautiful countryside in India – lush green fields dotted with trees and everywhere flowers wild with colour. After three hours we pulled into the centre of Dharamsala, and I exchanged my limousine for a jeep to ride the final few miles to my house, which was situated just above the village of McLeod Ganj, overlooking a broad valley.

It was a steep and rather hair-raising climb and I was reminded of some of the journeys around Lhasa where, from the edge of the road, you could sometimes look down thousands of feet. When we arrived at McLeod Ganj, we found that a new bamboo gate had been erected for us, with a sign saying 'Welcome' painted in gold letters across the top. From there it was a matter of only one more mile to my new home, Swarg Ashram, formerly Highcroft House and residence of the Divisional Commissioner in the days of the British Raj. It was a smallish house, set in woodland and surrounded by a compound of outbuildings, one of which was the kitchen. A further three houses had been requisitioned for my officials. Although it had good potential for expansion, this was less room than we had been used to, but I was grateful that we could now settle down.



It was quite late when we arrived so I was not able to see much, but the following morning, when I woke, the first thing I heard was the distinctive call of a bird which I later discovered is peculiar to this place. '*Kara-chok, Kara-chok*,' it seemed to say. I looked out of the window to see where it was, but could not find it. Instead, my eyes were greeted by a view of magnificent mountains.

On the whole, our experience at Dharamsala has been quite happy, although I note that Kundeling rediscovered his taste for Mussoorie milk and retired back there some years ago. The only real drawback of the Dharamsala region is its rainfall, which is the second highest in the Indian sub-continent. At first there were less than a hundred Tibetans all told. But today the refugee population has grown to more than five thousand. Only once or twice has there been any serious thought of moving. The last time was a few years ago when a severe earthquake caused damage to several buildings. People began to say that it was too dangerous to remain. We did not leave, however, mainly because whilst there is quite often seismic activity in the area, it is normally only slight. The last serious disturbance occurred in 1905, during the time that the British used the place as a summer retreat. On that occasion, the spire of their parish church was knocked down. So it seems reasonable to assume that large-scale tremors are very infrequent. Besides which, for practical reasons, it would be very difficult to move.

As at Birla House, I shared my new home with my mother – and also a couple of Lhasa Apso dogs which had recently been presented to me. These animals were a continual source of amusement to everyone. They both had very distinctive characters. The larger of the two was called Sangye. I often thought that he must have been a monk in his previous life, perhaps one of those who died of starvation in Tibet, as many did. I say this because on the one hand he showed no interest in the opposite sex, but on the other, he was most enthusiastic about food: even when he must have been completely full, he could always find room for more. Also, he was extremely loyal to me.

Tashi, the other, was very different. Despite being smaller, he

was much the braver of the two. He was given to me by Tenzin Norgay, the Everest mountaineer, so that may have had something to do with it. I well remember a time when he got ill and had to be given injections. After the first of these, he became very frightened. So on succeeding occasions when the vet came, he had to be caught up by two people and held down whilst the drugs were administered. Meanwhile, Tashi would growl and snarl at his persecutor who, when he had completed his work, had quickly to leave the house. Only then was it safe to let the little dog go, whereupon he would go racing off, sniffing all over the house in search of the poor man. But if he seemed rather ferocious, his bark was much worse than his bite: his jaw overlapped in such a way that he could not actually sink his teeth into anything.

When I moved to Dharamsala, I went with an Indian Government liaison officer, Mr Nair, and a number of Indian army bodyguards. I had an excellent relationship with Mr Nair, who volunteered to teach me English. Realising its importance, I had already arranged for Tenzin Choegyal to be sent to North Point, an English school in Darjeeling, and had started taking language lessons whilst at Mussoorie. Very generously, the Indian Government had provided someone to give me regular coaching, perhaps two or three times a week. But I was not at that time a very willing pupil and quickly found excuses to avoid them. So far I had made little progress. However, I enjoyed working with my new liaison officer and progressed well under his tuition, though I could not get enthusiastic about the mass of writing he gave me to do. I was sorry when he was posted elsewhere after two years.

From then on, my instruction in English was much less formal. Various other people helped me, including some Tibetans, but I doubt whether my command of the language is much better now than it was twenty-five years ago. I am always painfully reminded of this when I go abroad. I am often embarrassed at the terrible mistakes I make and regret that I did not work harder when I had the opportunity.

In addition to learning English during those first years of living in Dharamsala, I also rededicated myself to religious study. I began

by reviewing a number of Tibetan texts I had first looked at as a teenager. At the same time, I took teachings from some of the spiritual masters of different traditions who had come into exile. And although the realisation of *Bodhichitta* (the aspiration to achieve Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings) still seemed a long way off, I found that now there was no compulsion to work, the idea of it was not so unpleasant and I began to get a lot done. Unfortunately, lack of time quickly became a major obstacle to advancement in this sphere. But I can say that, insofar as I have achieved anything spiritually, it is out of all proportion to the amount of effort I have managed to put in.

Within a fortnight of our arrival in Dharamsala, I was able to open the first nursery for Tibetan refugee children. This was established in a small, previously derelict building rented for us by the Indian Government to house the growing number of orphans amongst the new arrivals. I appointed my elder sister, Tsering Dolma, to run it. There was not much room for them when the initial consignment of fifty children arrived. But they lived in luxury compared with later on, for, by the end of the year, their numbers had multiplied tenfold, with no end to the increase in sight. At one point, 120 shared a single bedroom. They had to sleep five or six to a bed, lying across it so that they could all fit on. But although conditions were harsh, I could not help feeling joy every time I went to visit my sister and her new extended family. For, parentless as they were, these destitutes were so full of laughter and joy that they seemed to make a mockery of their hardship.

My sister proved to be an excellent leader, who never gave in to despair. She was a powerful woman and quite strict, having inherited the family temper in full measure. At heart though, she was a very kind person with a good sense of humour. Her contribution in those difficult times was invaluable. As a simple village girl, she had had no education whatever and much of her early life was spent helping my mother run the family house. She had an enormous capacity for hard work. This, coupled with her rather fierce nature, made her an excellent leader.

However, it soon became apparent that neither we nor the Indian Government had sufficient resources to cope with all our orphans, and I came to the conclusion that it was necessary to have at least some of them adopted overseas, if that were possible. I therefore contacted a Swiss friend, Dr Aeschmann, and asked him to look into the possibility. Switzerland seemed to me an ideal place, given the fact that it is a relatively small country with excellent communications and, as a bonus, mountains which are reminiscent of home.

The Swiss Government was co-operative from the start and said it was willing to take 200 children immediately. Furthermore, it agreed to take steps to help ensure that, although the children were to be adopted into ordinary Swiss families, as far as possible there would be opportunities for them to pursue their own unique Tibetan culture and identity.

This first batch of children was followed by others, and later there was also a scheme not only for some older students to study in Switzerland but also for the resettlement of 1,000 adult refugees. As our situation improved, we no longer needed to call on the generosity of the Swiss nation. But I continue to be tremendously grateful to them for all they have done for my people.

Soon after arriving in Dharamsala, I came into personal contact with members of the International Commission of Jurists, whose work the previous year had done so much to encourage us. They invited me to give evidence to the Commission's Legal Inquiry Committee, which I gladly did. The results of these investigations were published in Geneva during August 1960. Once again, the Jurists entirely vindicated the Tibetan viewpoint: China, it reported, had violated sixteen articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was guilty of genocide in Tibet. They also detailed some of the vile atrocities I have already mentioned.

On a practical level, I learned one very useful thing from my discussions with the Commission. One of its members, an Englishman I think, asked me whether we had someone monitoring Peking's radio broadcasts. No, I replied, we did not. He was a little shocked at this and explained in some detail the necessity

of listening carefully to what they said. It is a comment on our lack of sophistication that this had not occurred to us. As far as we were concerned, Radio Peking did nothing but disseminate lies and propaganda. We did not see the value of listening to it for an indication of what was going on in the Chinese mind. However, I could see the logic of doing so and immediately instructed the *Kashag* to organise a monitoring team – whose successors carry on their work to this day.

Throughout 1960, I continued to work at reforming the Tibetan Administration and, together with the *Kashag* and others, I began the difficult process of full democratisation. On 2 September, I inaugurated the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies. Membership of this organisation, the highest legislative body of the Government, was open to freely elected representatives of the three regions of Tibet, U-Tsang, Amdo and Kham. Each of the main traditions within Tibetan Buddhism likewise had seats. Later, followers of the old Bon religion were also included. The Commission, now known as the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, or *Bhoe Mimang Chetui Lhenkhang*, functions much like a house of parliament. Its members meet with the *Kashag* and the secretaries of the different Departments, or *Lhenkhangs*, for discussions once a month. On specific occasions, it meets with the full National Working Committee, or *Gyunle*, which comprises the heads of the *Lhenkhangs* and members of the *Kashag* (whose members are today no longer appointed by me but elected). Anything put to the vote by the People's Deputy must be carried out according to the result.

To begin with, these new arrangements were not very satisfactory. Because the changes were so radical to Tibetans, some people even suggested that the Government in Dharamsala was practising *true* Communism! Three decades later, we are still faced with many problems, but things are changing and improving all the time. Certainly we are far ahead of our brothers and sisters in China, who could learn a great deal from us. At the time of writing, the Tibetan Government in Exile is in the process of implementing new measures to promote democracy further.

Some of the older officials who had come into exile found these changes hard to accept at first. But, on the whole, they saw the need for reform of our system and worked hard and enthusiastically to achieve it. I shall always think fondly of them. In the early years, although I was able to live in some degree of comfort, the same was by no means true for the majority of government officials. Many of them, even quite elderly men, were compelled to live under very poor conditions – some taking shelter in cowsheds, for example. But this they did cheerfully and without complaint, even though they had often lived extremely well throughout their lives in Tibet. And even if some of them disagreed in their hearts with the direction in which I was heading, due to their conservatism, each and every one contributed something during those dark days. They faced the difficulties we shared with great joy and determination and did all they could to help rebuild the shattered lives of our people, entirely without thought of personal gain. Their salary in those days was not above 75 rupees, or £3, a month, even though they could have done much better for themselves elsewhere, thanks to their education.

None of which is to say that the business of administration at that time was easy. Naturally, there were some personal differences between people and a fair amount of petty squabbling. That is only human nature. But overall, everyone expended their energies enthusiastically and unselfishly for the good of others.

My other main preoccupation right from the start was the preservation and continuation of our religion. Without it, I knew that the well-spring of our culture would dry up. Initially, the Government of India agreed to provide for a scholastic community of 300 monks to be established at the old prisoner-of-war camp at Buxa Duar, near the Bhutanese border. But, by explaining that Buddhism depends upon a high standard of scholarship, we managed eventually to persuade them to increase the commitment to funding for 1,500 of all traditions. This figure represented the youngest and most able of the 6,000-odd monks who had escaped into exile, and as many experienced teachers as had survived.

Unfortunately, conditions at Buxa Duar remained very bad.

The climate there was especially hot and humid and disease was rampant. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that food rations had to be sent in from far away. When they arrived, they were often in an extremely bad state. Within months, several hundred of these scholar monks had developed tuberculosis. Nevertheless, they worked and studied hard until they could be moved. To my sorrow, I was unable to visit the site but, meanwhile, I tried to sustain them with letters and taped messages. Evidently this paid off to some degree for, although the camp never overcame its terrible problems, the survivors became the nucleus of a vigorous monastic community.

Of course, one of the greatest difficulties we faced during those early years was lack of money. This was not a problem so far as our educational and resettlement programmes were concerned, thanks to the enormous generosity of the Indian Government and the various voluntary agencies overseas, which funded many projects. But I did not feel that it was appropriate to ask for assistance with things like the Administration. The small amount of revenue raised by the imposition of a voluntary freedom tax of 2 rupees per person per month, combined with a similarly voluntary monthly income tax of two per cent for salaried workers, did not go far. However, we had a lifeline in the form of the treasure, which Kenrap Tenzin had deposited in Sikkim with such foresight back in 1950. It was still there.

At first, I had it in mind to sell the treasure directly to the Indian Government, a plan proposed by Nehru himself. But my advisors were adamant that the treasure should be sold on the open market. They were certain we could get more for it that way. So it was finally disposed of in Calcutta, where it fetched what seemed to me an enormous sum, equivalent then to \$8 million.

A number of enterprises were invested in with this money. There was a plant to manufacture iron pipes and a business connected with a paper mill, amongst other supposedly guaranteed money-spinning projects. Unfortunately, it was not long before each of these attempts to make our precious capital work for us failed. Sadly, we were not well served by a number of people who

were ostensibly helping us. It seems they were more interested in helping themselves, and we lost the majority of the funds. The vision of the *Chikyab Kenpo* turned out to have been largely wasted.

Less than an eighth of the original total was salvaged to form what came to be known as His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Charitable Trust, which was set up in 1964. However, if there is some sadness in this episode, I myself do not regret very much the way things turned out. In retrospect, it is clear that the treasure belonged to all the people of Tibet, not just the few who had escaped into exile. We did not, therefore, have an exclusive right to it, no *Karmic* right. I was reminded of the example set by Ling Rinpoché, who left his favourite watch behind on the night that we left Lhasa. He felt that by going into exile he was forfeiting his right to it. I now see that this was the correct view.

As to my own personal finances, whereas in the old days there were two offices to look after the financial affairs of the Dalai Lama, since 1959 there has been only one. This is the Private Office, which handles all my income and expenditure, including my own allowance, which is paid in the form of a stipend by the Indian Government at the (unchanged) rate of 20 rupees a day: slightly more than a dollar, rather less than a pound. Theoretically, it pays for my food and clothing. As in former times, I have nothing directly to do with money, which is probably just as well as I have a suspicion that mine is a free-spending nature, although at the same time I know from my childhood that I can be very stingy over small amounts. However, I am of course able to direct how such funds as I personally receive are spent (for example, the Nobel Peace Prize money).

During that first summer in Dharamsala, I found time for some relaxation and took to playing badminton most evenings. (I often did not wear monk's robes.) Then, during the winter, which was very severe, we all enjoyed playing in the snow. My elder sister and my mother were particularly enthusiastic participants in snowball fights, despite their age.

A more serious form of recreation was trekking in the nearby

Dhauladar Range, whose highest mountain reaches to over seventeen thousand feet. I have always loved mountains. On one occasion, I climbed to a great height with a party consisting of my Tibetan bodyguards. At the top, we were all extremely tired, so I suggested we stop for some moments' rest. As we sat breathlessly admiring the beautiful view, I noticed that we were being watched from a distance by one of the mountain dwellers native to the area: a small, dark-skinned, rather furtive-looking man. He stood staring at us for a few minutes, then suddenly sat down on what looked like a small piece of wood and slid at great speed down the side of the mountain. I looked on fascinated as he disappeared into a speck thousands of feet below. I suggested we try his method of descent.

Someone produced a rope and all ten of us joined ourselves together with it. Then we all did as our silent friend had done and sat either on pieces of wood or flat rocks and sped off down the slope. It was great fun, if rather dangerous. There was much bumping and subsequent bruising as we slammed into one another in a whoosh of streaming snow. Luckily no one was hurt, but thereafter I noticed a certain reluctance on the part of many of my attendants to venture beyond our base-camps. My bodyguards in particular showed great hesitation whenever I announced a new expedition.

One other spare-time activity during this early period was my work with David Howarth, an English writer, on a book, *My Land and My People*, in which I gave a first account of my life.

In 1961, the Government published a synopsis of a Draft Constitution of Tibet. All members of the Tibetan population were invited to submit comments and criticisms. There were plenty of these. Mainly they referred to the important clause relating to the office of Dalai Lama. As a principal means of formalising the move away from theocracy to full democracy, I made provision for the National Assembly to be able to remove the incumbent from office given a two-thirds majority in favour. Unfortunately, the thought that the Dalai Lama could be deposed flabbergasted many Tibetans. I had to explain that democracy is

very much in keeping with Buddhist principles and, somewhat autocratically perhaps, insisted that the clause be left in.

During the early part of that year, in addition to visiting the road gangs again, I paid my first visit to the new settlement at Bylakuppe. On arrival, I found the settlers all to be very dark and thin. I saw immediately why they had been so pessimistic. The camp consisted of nothing but a few tents on the edge of a forest and, although the countryside was just as beautiful as I remembered it from my pilgrimage, the land itself did not look promising. Moreover, the heat from burning debris, combined with the heat of the sun, was almost unbearable.

The settlers had made a special tent for me with bamboo walls and a canvas roof. But even though it was well made, it was no proof at all against the terrible dust thrown up by the clearing process. Every day, a thick cloud of smoke and soot hung over the whole area. At night it would settle slowly, penetrating every tiny opening, so that in the morning you woke covered in a fine layer of powder. Because of these conditions, morale was very low. Yet there was not much I could do save give these pioneers every encouragement. I told them that we must not give up hope and assured them, hardly believing it myself, that in time we would be prosperous once more. I promised them that we would prevail. Fortunately, they believed every word I said and sure enough, little by little, their situation was transformed.

Thanks to the generosity of several Indian states, we were able, during the early 1960s, to establish over twenty settlements, gradually taking people off the roads, so that today there are only a few hundred, out of the present total of over 100,000 refugees, who are still making their living in road camps. And now it is of their own free will.

Because nearly half of the land given to us was situated in southern India, where the climate is considerably hotter than in the north, I stipulated that only the strongest should be sent in the early stages. Nevertheless, the death toll from sunstroke and heat exhaustion was at times so high that I wondered whether I had been right to accept land in the tropics. Yet, I was certain

that, eventually, my people would learn to adapt. Just as they had faith in me, I had faith in them.

Often I had to console the refugees in their sadness when I visited these camps. The thought of being so far from home and with no prospect of seeing ice or snow, let alone our beloved mountains, was hard for them to bear. I tried to take their minds off the past. Instead, I told them that the future of Tibet depended on us refugees. If we wanted to preserve our culture and way of life, the only way to do so was by building strong communities. I spoke too of the importance of education and even of the significance of the institution of marriage. Although it was not really a proper thing for a monk to advise, I told the women that wherever possible they should marry Tibetan men so that the children they bore would be Tibetans too.

The majority of the settlements were begun between 1960 and 1965. I visited them all as often as I could over this period. Although I never entertained thoughts of failure, there were moments when our problems seemed insurmountable. At Bandhara in Maharashtra state, for example, the first batch of settlers went in spring, just before the start of the hot season. Within a matter of weeks, a hundred (that is, a fifth) of them had died from the heat. When I visited them for the first time, they came to me with tears in their eyes and begged to be evacuated to a cooler place. I could do nothing other than explain to them that their arrival had been badly timed but that the worst was now certainly over. They should therefore learn to adopt the ways of the natives and see whether they couldn't make the best of the situation. I urged them to try for one more year. If they could not make a success of the place by the time I returned the following winter, then I promised to have them moved.

As it turned out, things went well from then on. Twelve months later I went back and found the settlers beginning to prosper. "So you're not all dead!" I said when I met the camp leaders. They laughed and replied that everything had happened just as I said it would. However, I must add that, although this particular community has since become quite successful, it proved impossible

to attract more than 700-odd settlers, due to the heat problem. As at Bylakuppe, we were given 3,000 acres of land on the basis of one acre per settler. But because of the small number who arrived we forfeited the remaining 2,300 acres, which were made over to some other refugees – though they did not last long either.

One of the great difficulties of the resettlement programme was that whilst we were able to foresee many of the obstacles before they arose, there were some that took us completely by surprise. At one place, for example, great difficulties were experienced as a result of wild boars and elephants straying on to the land. Not only did they destroy the crops, but they stampeded from time to time, knocking down several huts and killing a number of people.

I remember one old lama who lived there asking me to pray for their protection, but using the Sanskrit term *bathi* for elephant. It means, literally, precious creature and refers to the mythological elephants which symbolise charity. I knew precisely what he meant, but I was very surprised to hear the word used in this way. I suppose the monk had expected real elephants to be benevolent animals.

As it happened, many years later, whilst on a trip to Switzerland, I was on a tour of inspection at a farm where I was shown some electric fencing. Much to the surprise of my guide, I asked him whether he thought that this could deter elephants. He said that if the voltage were turned up sufficiently, he did not see why not. So I arranged for a batch to be sent out to the settlement in question.

Not all our problems were practical, however. At times, our culture has made it difficult for us Tibetans to adapt to new conditions. On that first visit to Bylakuppe, I well remember the settlers being very concerned that the burning they were having to carry out to clear the land was causing the death of innumerable small creatures and insects. For Buddhists, this was a terrible thing to be doing, since we believe that all life, not just human life, is sacred. Several of the refugees even came up to me and suggested that the work should be stopped.

A few of the projects set up with the assistance of the overseas

aid agencies failed for similar reasons. For example, all attempts to found poultry farms and piggeries have been unsuccessful. Even in their reduced circumstances, Tibetans have shown themselves unwilling to become involved in animal production for food. This has given rise to a certain amount of sarcasm on the part of some foreigners, who point out the anomaly between Tibetans' willingness to eat meat and their disinclination to provide it for themselves.

That said, the majority of projects undertaken with the help of these organisations have succeeded very well and our friends have been overjoyed at the positive results.

These experiences of support, freely given by people from the industrially advanced nations, have confirmed my basic belief in what I call Universal Responsibility. It seems to me to be the key to human development. Without such a sense of Universal Responsibility, there can be only unequal development in the world. The more people come to realise that we do not live on this planet of ours in isolation – that ultimately we are all brothers and sisters – the more likely is progress for all humankind, rather than for just parts of it.

Some of the people who came from overseas and gave their lives to the refugees stand out. One of these was Maurice Friedmann, a Jew from Poland. I met him for the first time in 1956, together with Uma Devi, a painter friend of his, also Polish. They had both settled (independently) on the sub-continent to pursue the Indian way of life. When we came into exile, they were amongst the very first people to offer their assistance.

Friedmann, who was quite old by this time, was in poor physical condition. He had a permanent stoop and thick spectacles which betrayed his failing sight, yet he had the most piercing blue eyes and an extremely sharp brain. He could be exasperating at times: he would argue stubbornly in favour of projects which were completely impossible. But on the whole, the advice he gave, especially in regard to the establishment of children's homes, was invaluable. Uma Devi, who was more spiritually inclined than

Friedmann, but similarly oldish, also devoted the rest of her life to working on behalf of my people.

Another important character was Mr Luthi, who worked for the Swiss Red Cross. *Pala* ('Papa' in Tibetan), as he was known, was a man of tremendous zeal and energy, a real leader, who drove the people under him extremely hard. The habitually easy-going Tibetans found him quite difficult to take and I know there was a certain amount of grumbling about his methods, but in reality he was well-loved by all. I cherish his memory, and that of others like him, who worked so hard and so selflessly for my people.

For us Tibetan refugees, one significant event during the early 1960s was the Sino-Indian War of 1962. Naturally, I was extremely sad when the fighting began, but it was a sadness tinged with fear. At that time, the resettlement process was still in its earliest stage. Several of the road camps were situated perilously close to where the fighting took place, in Ladakh and NEFA, with the result that they were forced to close. Some of my people thus became refugees a second time. What made the whole experience even sadder for us was the spectacle of our saviours, the Indians, being humiliated by Chinese soldiers stationed on Tibetan soil.

Mercifully, it was a short war, although at the end of it there were many dead on both sides for no obvious gain to either. Reflecting on his China policy, Nehru was forced to state that India had been 'living in a fool's paradise of our own making'. All his life, he had dreamed of a free Asia, in which every country would coexist in harmony. Now Panch Sheel was shown to be an empty vessel, less than a decade after it had been signed and despite everything that this most humane man had done to preserve it.

I remained in contact with Pandit Nehru right up to his death in 1964. He himself continued to take a close interest in the plight of the Tibetan refugees, especially the children whose education he always held to be of the greatest importance. Many people say that the Sino-Indian War broke his spirit. I think they may be right. I saw him for the last time in May of that year. As I entered his room; I sensed that he was in a state of deep mental shock. He

had just suffered a stroke and was very weak and haggard-looking, propped up in an armchair with pillows under each arm. As well as obvious signs of acute physical discomfort, I also noticed indications of intense mental strain in him. Our meeting was short and I left with a heavy heart.

Later that same day he left to go to Dehra Dun, and I went to bid him farewell at the airport. When I got there, I happened to see Indira Gandhi, his daughter, whom I had come to know well over the years since I first met her when she accompanied her father to Peking in 1954 (I had at first been under the impression that she was his wife). I told her how sorry I was to find her father in such poor health. I went on to say that I feared I had seen him for the last time.

As it turned out I was right, for within less than a week he was dead. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend his cremation. Instead, I participated in the scattering of his ashes at the confluence of the three rivers in Allahabad. This was a great honour for me, as it made me feel close to his family. One of its members that I saw there was Indira. Sometime after the ceremony, she came up to me and, looking straight into my eyes, said, 'You knew.'

A Wolf in Monk's Robes

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TSERING DOLMA also died in 1964. Her work was taken over by Jetsun Pema, our younger sister, who has shown similar courage and determination. Today, the nursery thrives as part of the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) in Dharamsala.

The TCV, which has many branches throughout the settlements, today houses and educates more than six thousand children in all, around fifteen hundred of them at Dharamsala. Although most of the initial funding was by the Indian Government, much of the expense is now met by the charity SOS International. Thirty years on, it is pleasing to see the results of our efforts in the field of education. Presently, more than two thousand refugee children have graduated from schools of higher education – most of them in India, but a growing number in the West. Throughout this time I have taken a close interest in our education programme, always mindful of Nehru's remark about children being our most precious resource.

In those early days, these schools were nothing more than dilapidated buildings where Indian teachers taught very diverse groups of children. Now, we have a healthy number of qualified Tibetan staff. But still there are considerable numbers of Indian educators involved. To these men and women, and their predecessors, I wish to offer my deepest thanks. I cannot adequately express the gratitude I feel for the many who have so freely devoted much of their lives to the service of my people, often in very poor conditions and in remote areas.

On the negative side, it is unfortunately the case that many children do not finish their education, especially girls. This is

sometimes due to their own disinclination, sometimes to their parents' shortsightedness. Whenever I have the opportunity, and it is appropriate, I tell parents that they have a great responsibility not to use their children's small hands for their own short-term benefit. Otherwise, there is a danger of producing semi-educated children, who see the colourful opportunities of life but, because of their lack of education, are not equipped to grasp them. This can result in dissatisfaction and even greed.

The man who succeeded Pandit Nehru as Prime Minister of India was Lal Bahadur Shastri. Despite his being in power for less than three years, I met him quite a number of times and grew to respect him very much. Like Nehru before him, Shastri was a great friend of the Tibetan refugees. Even more than Nehru, however, he was also a political ally.

In autumn 1965, Tibet was discussed at the United Nations once more, thanks to a draft resolution submitted by Thailand, the Philippines, Malta, Ireland, Malaysia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. On this occasion India, at Shastri's insistence, voted in favour of Tibet. During his tenure of office, it began to look as if the new Indian Government might even recognise the Tibetan Government in Exile. But sadly, the Prime Minister did not live long. In the meantime, India went to war once more, this time with Pakistan. Fighting broke out on 1 September 1965.

Because Dharamsala lies less than a hundred miles from the Indo-Pakistan border, I was able to see at first hand the tragic effects of battle. Not long after the fighting had begun, I left home for one of my frequent visits to the settlements in the south. It was night and there was a total blackout in force. We were compelled to drive the three hours to Pathankot railway station without headlights. The only other traffic on the road was military and I remember thinking that it is a very sad state of affairs when ordinary citizens are forced into hiding and the 'defence forces' are called forward. In reality, of course, these are the same people – human beings like myself.

When at last we reached the station, after a difficult journey, I

could hear the heavy shelling of Pathankot airport in the near distance. At one point, I heard jets shrieking overhead and then, moments later, the luminous stutter of anti-aircraft tracers spat up into the sky. The noise was terrifying and I was quite frightened, though I am pleased to say that I was not the only one. I have never been on a train that pulled out of a station as fast as ours did that night!

On arrival in the south, I went first to Bylakuppe, where I saw the original refugee settlement, reaching it on 10 September. By now it was home to more than 3,200 people. There was also permanent housing, each building being constructed of brick and roofed with local tiles, and work on the drilling of wells and cutting down of trees was completed. According to the original plan, agricultural work was now beginning in earnest. Each person had been given nominal ownership of one acre of land, though really it was farmed co-operatively, with a small proportion kept over for private kitchen gardens which produced seasonal fruits and vegetables. The main crops were to be rice, maize and *ragi* (millet). I was very happy to see such progress. It confirmed my belief in the tremendous power of a positive outlook when coupled with great determination.

Overall, I found the situation considerably improved. No longer did I have to confront people who were on the edge of despair. Nor did I have to make promises of future prosperity which I myself could hardly believe. But although there were signs that their tenacity was paying off, the life of the settlers was still extremely hard.

In the earliest days of planning the resettlement programme with the Indian Government, we had hoped that the refugees would be self-sufficient within five years. Thereafter, it was intended that the Tibetans would begin to contribute to India's economy by raising an agricultural surplus which could then be sold. However, our optimism failed fully to acknowledge that the workforce was completely untrained. Few of the people who worked on the land had any knowledge of farming. Former tradesmen, monks, soldiers, nomads and simple villagers who knew

nothing were all pitched into this new enterprise, regardless. And of course, agriculture in the Indian tropics is a very different proposition from agriculture at Tibet's high altitudes. So even those who did know something about it had to learn entirely new methods, from working with bullocks to using and maintaining tractors. Thus, even after almost five years, conditions in the camps were still very primitive.

Yet, looking back, I see that in some ways the mid-1960s were a high point in the Tibetan resettlement programme: the majority of the necessary land clearance had been done, most of the refugees had access to basic medical attention, courtesy of the International Red Cross and others – and the farm machinery was still fairly new, whereas today it is old and in great need of replacement.

On this occasion in 1965, I remained for a week or ten days at Bylakuppe, after which I took the opportunity to visit Mysore, Ootacamund and Madras by road before proceeding to Trivandrum, capital of Kerala, India's most literate state. I was invited to reside with the Governor. In the end, my stay turned out to be one of several weeks on account of the war in the north, which continued to look very dangerous: two bombs had already fallen on Dharamsala. However, the time was not wasted.

It so happened that my room in the Rajbhavan, the Governor's residence, looked directly on to the kitchens opposite. One day I chanced to see the slaughter of a chicken, which was subsequently served up for lunch; as it was having its neck wrung, I thought of how much suffering the poor creature was enduring. The realisation filled me with remorse and I decided it was time to become a vegetarian. As I have already mentioned, Tibetans are not, as a rule, vegetarians, because in Tibet vegetables are often scarce and meat forms a large part of the staple diet. Nevertheless, according to some *Mahayana* texts, monks and nuns should really be vegetarians.

To check my resolve, I had the food sent in to me. When it arrived, I looked at it very carefully. The chicken had been cooked in the English style, with onions and gravy; it smelled delicious. But I had no difficulty refusing it. From that moment on, I adhered

minutely to the vegetarian rule and, in addition to abstaining from meat, ate neither fish nor eggs.

This new regime suited me well and I was very contented; I felt a sense of fulfilment from a strict interpretation of the rule. Back in 1954, in Peking, I had discussed the subject of vegetarianism with Chou En-lai and another politician at a banquet. This other man claimed to be vegetarian, yet he was eating eggs. I questioned this and argued that because chickens come from eggs, eggs could not be considered to be vegetarian food. We disagreed quite strongly – at least until Chou brought the discussion to a diplomatic close.

The war with Pakistan ended on 10 January 1966. But with this happy event came bad news: the death of Prime Minister Shastri in Tashkent, where he had gone to negotiate a settlement with the Pakistani President, Ayub Khan. He passed away within a few hours of signing the peace treaty.

Lal Bahadur Shastri has left a powerful impression on my memory for, although he was a small, rather weak and ineffectual-looking man, he had a powerful mind and spirit. Despite his frail appearance, he was an outstanding leader. Unlike so many people who hold positions of great responsibility, he was bold and decisive: he did not allow events to carry him along, but did his best to direct them.

Shortly after, I was invited to attend the cremation, which I did on my way back home from Trivandrum. It was a sorrowful affair, particularly as it was the first time in my life that I had seen a dead body from close up – even though as a Buddhist I visualise death every day. I remember looking at his inert form lying on top of the funeral pyre and recalling all his mannerisms and the little bits of personal information he had shared with me. He himself was a strict vegetarian, he had told me, because as a young schoolboy he had once chased a wounded pigeon round and round until it died of exhaustion. He was so horrified at what he had done that he vowed never to eat another living creature. So not only had India lost one of her finest politicians, not only had the world

lost an enlightened leader, but mankind had lost a genuinely compassionate spirit.

After paying my final respects to the late Prime Minister, I returned to Dharamsala, but not before visiting some of the hospitals in Delhi containing casualties from the war. Most of those that I saw were officers. Many were in great pain and enduring terrible hardship. As I walked between the rows of beds, amongst sobbing family members of the wounded, I thought to myself that this was the only real result of war: tremendous human suffering. Anything else that might arise from conflict could just as easily be brought about by peaceful means. It was small consolation to realise that the people in this hospital were being well looked after: many of those who had been caught up in the struggle would not have the benefit of such good facilities.

A fortnight later, Indira Gandhi was sworn in as Prime Minister of India. Because I had seen her practically every time I saw her father, I already felt quite close to her. I have reason to believe that she felt quite close to me too. More than once she took me into her confidence about people and things that were causing her trouble. And for my part, I considered that I knew her well enough to be able to remind her, on one occasion towards the end of her first administration, that it is vital for a leader to keep in touch with the common people.

I myself had learned at an early age that anyone who wishes to lead must remain close to the common people. Otherwise, it is all too easy to be misled by advisors and officials and others around you who, for reasons of their own, might wish to prevent you from seeing things clearly.

As with each of India's Prime Ministers, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Indira Gandhi for her warm support of the Tibetan refugees. From its inception, she was a member of the Tibetan Homes Foundation based in Mussoorie and was particularly helpful in the field of education. She had her father's vision when it came to the importance of schooling. And although much strong language was used to denounce her after the Emergency, with some people even calling her a dictator, I note that she relinquished

power quite gracefully when the electorate delivered its verdict in March 1977. To me that was a wonderful example of democracy in action: though there was much conflict both within Parliament and without, when the moment came for her to leave, she did so without fuss. I remember thinking the same about President Nixon. So often a change of leadership is taken as a cue for blood-letting. It is a sign of a truly civilised country when parliamentary procedure triumphs over personal interest.

The People's Republic of China presented a very different picture of domestic politics at this time. From the mid-1960s until Mao's death in 1976, the country, together with its colonies, endured a series of bloody and violent upheavals. Many years passed before a true picture of the so-called Cultural Revolution began to emerge. It turned out that not only was this a period of aimless madness, but the behaviour of Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, resembled that of an Empress. At the same time, I realised that the Communist leaders, who at first I had thought of as having a single mind inhabiting their different bodies, were all at each other's throats.

Then, however, it was not possible to do more than guess at the extent of the turmoil. Along with many Tibetans I realised that terrible things were happening in our beloved homeland. But communications had dried up entirely. Our only sources of news were individual Nepalese traders who were occasionally allowed over the border. However, such information as they were able to give us was scant and invariably outdated. For example, it was not until over a year later that I learned of a large-scale revolt that took place in several different parts of Tibet during 1969. According to some reports, even more people were killed during the reprisals that followed than in 1959.

We know now that many such outbreaks of unrest occurred. Of course, I had no direct contact with the leaders in Peking who, at this time, began to refer to me as the 'wolf in monk's robes'. I became the focus of the Chinese Government's bile and was regularly denounced in Lhasa as someone who merely posed as a religious leader. In reality, the Chinese said, I was a thief, a

murderer and a rapist. They also suggested that I performed certain quite surprising sexual services for Mrs Gandhi!

Thus, for almost fifteen years, the Tibetan refugees entered a period of darkness. The prospect of returning to our homeland seemed further off then than when we had first come into exile. But of course night is the time for regeneration and during these years the resettlement programme was brought to fruition. Gradually, more and more people were taken off the roads and put into the new settlements around India. Also, a few of the refugees left India to found small communities around the world. At the time of writing, there are approximately 1,200 spread throughout Canada and the United States (in equal proportions), some 2,000 in Switzerland, 100 in Great Britain, and a handful in almost every other European country, including one young family in Ireland.

In tandem with this second wave of resettlement, the Tibetan Government in Exile opened offices in several countries overseas. The first of these was in Kathmandu, the second in New York, followed by Zurich, Tokyo, London and Washington respectively. As well as looking after the interests of Tibetans living in these countries, the Offices of Tibet also do what they can to disseminate information about our country, culture, history and way of life both in exile and at home.

In 1968, I made plans to move from Swarg Ashram, my home for eight years, into a small house called Bryn Cottage. The building itself was no bigger than the last one, but it had the advantage of a newly constructed compound, which housed the Private Office and the Indian Security Office, along with an audience-room and an office for myself. The Tibetan Government in Exile had grown to be an organisation several hundred strong, and most of them were now moved into a complex of offices some distance away. At the same time as this reorganisation was taking place, my mother also moved to a new house, Kashmir Cottage (thought not very willingly at first), enabling me to live a truly monastic life once more.

Shortly after moving to Bryn Cottage, I was able to refound

Namgyal monastery, whose monks were previously living in a small house above Swarg Ashram. Today it occupies a building not far from my own residence. A little later, in 1970, work was also completed on a new temple, the Tsuglakhang. This meant that I now had the opportunity to take part in the various ceremonies of the traditional Tibetan calendar in an appropriate setting. Today, adjacent to the buildings at Namgyal, is housed the School of Buddhist Dialectics, which helps to keep alive the art of debating within our monastic community. Most afternoons, the courtyard outside the temple is now full of young monks in maroon robes clapping their hands and shaking their heads and laughing as they practise for their examinations.

In 1963, I had called a meeting of all heads of the different traditions, together with representatives of the Bon religion. We discussed our common difficulties and strategies for overcoming them in order to preserve and propagate the different aspects of our Tibetan Buddhist culture. At the end of several days, I was satisfied that, if we could only provide ourselves with the right facilities, our religion would survive. And now, soon after reinaugurating my own monastery, I re-established Ganden, Drepung and Sera, in the southern state of Karnataka, initially with a complement of 1,300 monks – the survivors from Buxa Duar.

Today, as we begin our fourth decade in exile, there is a thriving monastic community over six thousand strong. I would even go so far as to say that we have too many monks: after all, it is the quality and dedication of these people that counts, not their numbers.

Another cultural enterprise begun towards the end of the 1960s was the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, which not only contains more than forty thousand original Tibetan volumes but is also involved in publishing both English-language and Tibetan books. During 1990, it published its 200th English title. The Library building is constructed in traditional Tibetan style and, besides housing literature, also contains a museum that is stocked with many items brought to India by the refugees. Of the few

possessions that people were able to bring with them, a lot took *thangkas*, books of scripture and other religious artefacts. Many of these they characteristically offered to the Dalai Lama. I in turn passed items on to these organisations.

Just before actually moving in to Bryn Cottage, I became very ill for a number of weeks. On returning to Dharamsala in early 1966, after the cessation of conflict between India and Pakistan, I had taken enthusiastically to my new, vegetarian diet. Unfortunately, there are few dishes in Tibetan cuisine that do not use meat and it was some time before the cooks learned how to make them taste good without it. But eventually they succeeded and began to produce delicious meals. I felt really well on them. Meanwhile, several Indian friends told me of the importance of supplementing my diet with plenty of milk and different kinds of nuts. I followed this advice faithfully – with the result that after twenty months I contracted a severe case of jaundice.

On the first day, I vomited a great deal. Thereafter, I lost my appetite completely for two or three weeks, and fell into a state of utter exhaustion. To move at all required tremendous effort. On top of this, my skin turned bright yellow. I looked like the Buddha himself! Some people used to say that the Dalai Lama lives as a prisoner in a golden cage: on this occasion, I was golden-bodied too.

Eventually the illness, which turned out to be Hepatitis B, cleared up, but not before I had consumed large quantities of Tibetan medicine (about which I shall say more in a later chapter). As soon as I began once more to take an interest in eating, I was instructed by my doctors that not only must I take less greasy food, cut-out nuts and reduce my consumption of milk, but also I must start eating meat again. They were very much afraid that the illness had caused permanent damage to my liver and were of the opinion that, as a result, my life has probably been shortened. A number of Indian doctors I consulted were of the same opinion, so reluctantly I returned to being non-vegetarian. Today, I eat meat except on special occasions required by my spiritual practice.

The same is true for a number of Tibetans who followed my example and suffered a similar fate.

From the start, I was very happy in my new home. Like Swarg Ashram, the house was originally built by the British and stands at the top of a hill in a small garden of its own, surrounded by trees. It has a fine view both of the Dhauladar mountain range and of the valley, in which lies Dharamsala itself. Apart from having sufficient space just outside to address over a thousand people, its main attraction for me is the garden. I set to work on it immediately and planted many different types of fruit trees and flowers. This I did with my own hands: gardening is one of my great joys. Sadly, few of the trees did well and they produce rather poor, bitter fruit, but I took consolation from the great variety of animals, and particularly birds, that came to visit.

I enjoy watching wildlife even more than gardening. For this purpose, I constructed a bird table just outside my study window. It is surrounded by wire and netting to keep out the larger birds and birds of prey, which tend to scare off their smaller brethren. This is not always sufficient to keep them away, however. Occasionally I am compelled to take out one of the air guns that I acquired shortly after arriving in India, in order to discipline these fat, greedy trespassers. Having spent a great deal of time as a child at the Norbulingka practising with the Thirteenth's old air rifle, I am quite a good shot. Of course, I never kill them. My intention is only to inflict a measure of pain in order to teach a lesson.

My days at Bryn Cottage were taken up in much the same way as before. Each winter I toured the refugee settlements, and from time to time I gave teachings. I also continued my religious studies. In addition, I began to try to learn something about Western thought, particularly in the fields of science, astronomy and philosophy. And in my spare moments, I rediscovered my old enthusiasm for photography. As a thirteen or fourteen year old, I had acquired my first box camera through the good offices of Serkon Rinpoché, the lame *tsenshap*.

At first, I entrusted the exposed films to him for development. He then pretended that the films were his own (to save me from

embarrassment if I had photographed anything that might be considered unworthy of the Dalai Lama) and took them to a merchant. They were then processed in India. This procedure always caused him anxiety – because if my subject matter really had been unsuitable, he would have had to take responsibility! Later on though, I constructed a darkroom at the Norbulingka and, from Jigme Taring, one of my officials, learned how to do this work myself.

Another hobby that I resumed after moving to my new home was that of mending watches. Having more space than before, I was able to set aside a room as a workshop, for which I acquired a proper set of tools. For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by watches and rosaries, a facet of character that I share with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Often, when I look at our differences in nature, I think that it is not possible that I am his reincarnation. But considering our interest in watches and rosaries, I realise that of course I must be!

When I was very young, I carried my predecessor's pocket-watch. But what I always longed for was a wrist-watch – although some people advised me against them. As soon as I was old enough to convince Serkon Rinpoché that I needed them, I arranged for him to buy me a Rolex and an Omega from the Lhasa market. Incredible as it may seem, even in those far off days before the Chinese had arrived to civilise us, it was possible to buy Swiss watches in Lhasa. In fact, there were few things that you could not buy from the market – everything from Marmite and Yardley's soap from England to last month's edition of *Life* magazine were quite easily obtainable.

Needless to say, the first thing I did with my latest acquisitions was take them apart. When I first saw the tiny pieces that comprised the mechanism, I regretted my haste. But it did not take me long to put them back together again or to learn how to slow them down and speed them up. So I was delighted when I was finally able to have a proper workshop to do these things. I repaired quite a few apparently hopeless cases for family and friends and still to this day like to keep my tools handy, although I no longer

have time to do very much of this work. Besides, so many watches that are made today are impossible to open without scratching. I fear that I have disappointed a number of people whose timepieces have been returned to them in full working order, but in less than pristine condition.

That said, I have managed more or less to keep up with modern technology, although, of course, digital watches are outside my scope. I need admit only to a couple of failures. One of these was the beautiful, gold Patek Philippe sent to me as a gift by President Roosevelt. With separate movements for the second hand and date, it was beyond me – and beyond the professional repairers I sent it to as well. It was not until I took it personally to the manufacturers whilst on a visit to Switzerland a few years ago that anyone has succeeded in getting it to run properly. Fortunately, it was in the hands of an Indian repairer at the time of my escape from Lhasa. Another failure was a watch belonging to a member of my Government: I regret to say that I had to send it back in an envelope – in pieces.

At this point I can perhaps mention the three cats which I have owned whilst in India. The first of them joined my household towards the end of the 1960s. It was a black-and-white spotted female called Tsering, who had many good points, amongst which was her friendliness. I have few rules for any creature that joins my household, other than that they are compelled to be monks and nuns, but Tsering had one major failing which I, as a Buddhist, could not tolerate: she was unable to resist chasing mice. I frequently had to discipline her for this. It was on one of these occasions that I regret to say she met her end. I caught her in the very act of killing a mouse inside my house. When I shouted at her, she ran to the top of a curtain, where she suddenly lost her grip, fell to the ground and was mortally wounded. Despite all the attention and care I could give her, she did not recover and died within a few days.

Not long afterwards, however, I discovered a small kitten in the garden, which had apparently been abandoned by its mother. I picked it up and noticed that its hind legs were crippled in just the same way as Tsering's were when she died. I took this creature

into my house and looked after it until eventually it was able to walk. Like Tsering, she was also female, but very beautiful and even more gentle. She also got along very well with the two dogs, particularly Sangye, against whose furry chest she liked to lie.

When she in her turn died, after both dogs, I decided against having any more pets. As my Senior Tutor, Ling Rinpoché, himself a great animal lover, had once said, 'Pets are in the end only an extra source of anxiety to their owners.' Besides, from the Buddhist point of view, it is not enough to be thinking and caring about only one or two animals when all sentient beings are in need of your thoughts and prayers.

However, during the winter of 1988, I happened to notice a sick kitten with its mother in the kitchens opposite the front entrance to my house. I took her into my care. To my surprise, I found that she too was crippled, just as her two predecessors had been. So I fed her with Tibetan medicine and milk from a pipette until she was strong enough to be able to look after herself, and she has now joined my household. At the time of writing, she does not yet have a name: that will come in due course. In the meantime, she has proved herself to be a very lively individual and very curious. Whenever I have a visitor to the house, she invariably comes to inspect them. So far she is quite well behaved as regards chasing other creatures, though she is not above helping herself to food from my table if the opportunity arises.

One observation about animals I have is that, even as pets and despite having all facilities, they tend to run away, given the chance. This reinforces my belief that the desire for freedom is fundamental to all living beings.

To me, one of the most important aspects of my thirty-one years in exile has been my meetings with people from all walks of life. Thanks to India being a free country, there has been no restriction on who I am permitted to see. On occasion, I have had the good fortune to welcome some truly remarkable people. Sometimes,

though, I also receive people who are quite sick, even mentally disturbed. But mostly, those that I see are ordinary men and women.

Whenever I do meet people, my aim is to help in any way that I can, and also to learn what I can.

Infrequently, these audiences are awkward in some way, but in every case that I can recall, I have parted on friendly terms with all who have come to visit. I believe that this has been possible by always having the same motivation of sincerity.

Especially, I enjoy meeting men and women from varied backgrounds, including some from different religious traditions. One famous example was J. Krishnamurti. I found him to be an impressive person, with a sharp mind and considerable learning. Although he had a gentle appearance, he had very clear-cut views about life and its meaning. Subsequently, I have also met many followers of his who have derived much benefit from his teachings.

One of my happiest memories of this time is the occasion when I was fortunate enough to receive a visit from Father Thomas Merton, the American Benedictine monk. He came to Dharamsala in November 1968, just a few weeks before his tragic death in Thailand. We met on three consecutive days, for two hours at a time. Merton was a well-built man of medium height, with even less hair than me, though that was not because his head was shaved as mine is. He had big boots and wore a thick leather belt round the middle of his heavy, white cassock. But more striking than his outward appearance, which was memorable in itself, was the inner life that he manifested. I could see he was a truly humble and deeply spiritual man. This was the first time that I had been struck by such a feeling of spirituality in anyone who professed Christianity. Since then, I have come across others with similar qualities, but it was Merton who introduced me to the real meaning of the word 'Christian'.

Our meetings were conducted in a very pleasant atmosphere. Merton was both humorous and well informed. I called him a Catholic *geshe*. We talked about intellectual and spiritual matters that were of mutual interest and exchanged information about

monasticism. I was keen to learn all that I could about the monastic tradition in the West. He told me a number of things that surprised me, notably that Christian practitioners of meditation do not adopt any particular physical position when they meditate. According to my understanding, position and even breathing are vital. We also discussed the vows taken by Christian monks and nuns.

For his part, Merton wanted to know all he could about the Bodhisattva ideal. He also hoped to meet a teacher who could introduce him to Tantrism. Altogether, it was a most useful exchange – not least because I discovered from it that there are many similarities between Buddhism and Catholicism. So I was extremely sad to hear of his sudden death. Merton acted as a strong bridge between our two very different religious traditions. Above all, he helped me to realise that every major religion, with its teaching of love and compassion, can produce good human beings.

Since my meeting with Father Thomas Merton, I have had considerable contact with other Christians. On my visits to Europe, I have visited monasteries in a number of different countries and, on each occasion, have been very impressed with what I have seen. The monks that I have met have shown a devotion to their calling of which I am quite envious. Although they are comparatively few in number, I have the impression that their quality and dedication are very high. Conversely, we Tibetans, even in exile, have a very large number of monks – four or five per cent of the exile population. Yet there is not always the same degree of dedication.

I am also very impressed with the practical work of Christians of all denominations through charitable organisations dedicated to health and education. There are many wonderful examples of these in India. This is one area where we can learn from our Christian brothers and sisters: it would be very useful if Buddhists could make a similar contribution to society. I feel that Buddhist monks and nuns tend to talk a great deal about compassion without doing much about it. On several occasions, I have discussed this matter with Tibetans as well as other Buddhists and am actively

encouraging the setting up of similar organisations. However, if it is true that we can learn from Christians, I also feel that they could learn from us. For example, the techniques we have developed for meditation and one-pointed concentration of the mind might well help them in other areas of the religious life.

The end of the 1960s coincided with the first signs that my dream of resettling all 100,000 Tibetan exiles in India, Nepal and Bhutan could be achieved. So although the little news I heard from Tibet was very depressing, I looked forward to the future with a sense of real and well-founded optimism. However, two series of events outside my direct control reminded me of just how precarious our position was.

The first of these concerned approximately four thousand refugees who had settled in Bhutan. The Kingdom of Bhutan is a remote country lying on the far eastern border of India, due south of U-Tsang, the central province of Tibet. Like Tibet, it is a land of majestic mountains and is home to a devoutly religious people who follow the same Buddhism as we do. Unlike Tibet, it is a full member of the United Nations.

The late King of Bhutan was very kind to the Tibetans who sought exile in his country and, with assistance from the Indian Government, he provided land and transport and helped to set up agricultural settlements for my people.

All went well to begin with, and the Tibetans were very happy. When I met with a group of them at the first *Kalachakra* initiation ceremony that I gave in Bodh Gaya in 1974, I was pleased to learn that they were doing well. They were full of praise for their hosts, and especially for the new king, Jigme Wangchuk, who had recently ascended the throne. He impressed everyone with his maturity in handling affairs of state. But only a few months later, matters took a turn for the worse. Twenty-two prominent members of the Tibetan community were arrested, tortured and thrown, without trial, into jail in Timphu, the capital. My personal representative, Lhading (a relation of the late king), was amongst them. I was deeply distressed at this news and felt that there

should be a thorough investigation (though I did not believe the allegations of conspiracy levelled against these people). This did not happen and the true position never became clear. Eventually, I realised that these Tibetans were being used as scapegoats in an internal affair of the Bhutanese Government.

After this unfortunate occurrence, many of the refugees decided to leave Bhutan. But those who remained have since continued to live peacefully, despite there still being some suspicion and resentment against them, I believe. In any case, I am grateful to the Bhutanese people and Government for all they have done for my people and am certain that in the future our traditional friendly relations will be fully restored.

The other sad episode concerned the guerrillas, trained and equipped by the CIA, who continued their struggle to regain Tibetan freedom by violent means. On more than one occasion, I tried to discover detailed information about these operations from Gyalo Thondup and others, but I have never heard the full story. I do know, however, that in 1960 a guerrilla base was established in Mustang, an area which lay in the most remote northern region of Nepal, right on the border with Tibet. A force several thousand strong drawn from the exile population was assembled there (though only a small proportion actually received training from the Americans). Unfortunately, the logistics of this camp were not well planned. As a result, the would-be insurgents endured many difficulties, though of course nothing compared with the dangers faced by the many extraordinarily brave freedom fighters who carried on the struggle from inside Tibet itself.

When the base finally became operational, the guerrillas harassed the Chinese on a number of occasions and once managed to destroy a convoy. It was this raid which captured the document recording the 87,000 deaths in Lhasa during the period March 1959–September 1960. These successes had some positive result in that they boosted morale. But the fact that there was no consistent, effective follow-up probably only resulted in more suffering for the people of Tibet. Worse, these activities gave the Chinese Government the opportunity to blame

the efforts of those seeking to regain Tibetan independence on the activities of foreign powers – whereas, of course, it was an entirely Tibetan initiative.

In the end, the Americans discontinued their backing for the guerrillas following their recognition of the Chinese Government in the 1970s – which indicates that their assistance had been a reflection of their anti-Communist policies rather than genuine support for the restoration of Tibetan independence.

The guerrillas, however, were determined to fight on. This caused the Chinese Government (who must have been considerably troubled by their activities) to demand that Nepal disarm the forces in Mustang, even though there must have been some arrangement between these Tibetans and the Nepalese Government. But when they tried to do so, the guerrillas refused, saying that they were determined to carry on even if it meant that they must now fight the Nepalese army as well.

Although I had always admired the determination of the guerrillas, I had never been in favour of their activities and now I realised that I must intervene. I knew that the only way I could hope to make an impression on them was by making a personal appeal. Accordingly, I instructed former *Kusun Depon* P. T. Takla to take a taped message to their leaders. In it, I said that it would be senseless to fight the Nepalese; not least because there were several thousand Tibetan refugees settled in Nepal who would also suffer if they did. Instead they ought to be grateful to the Nepalese Government. They should therefore lay down their arms and themselves settle peacefully. The Tibetan struggle needed a long-term approach.

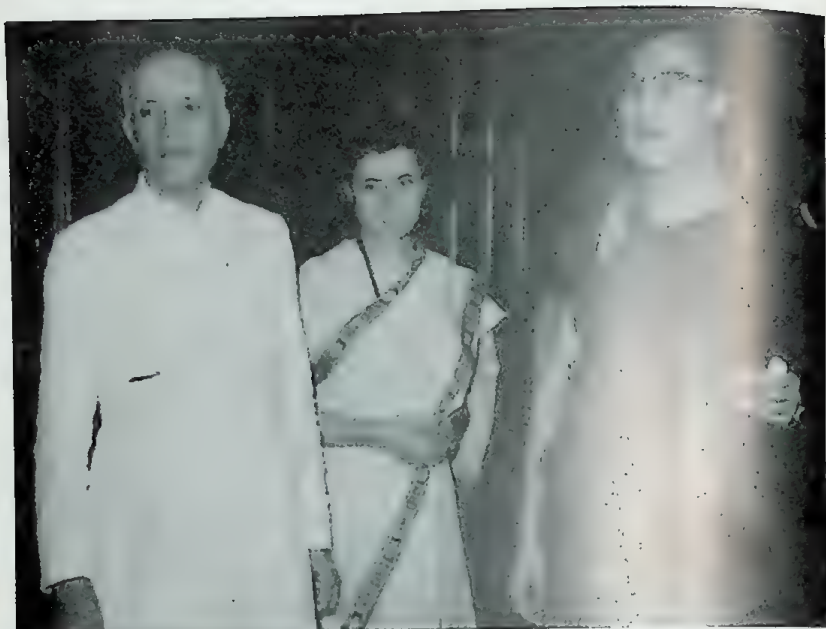
Afterwards, P. T. Takla told me that many of the men felt that they had been betrayed – a few of their leaders actually cut their own throats rather than leave. I was distraught to hear this. Naturally, I had had mixed feelings about appealing to the freedom fighters. It seemed wrong in a way to challenge such courage, such loyalty and such love for Tibet, though I knew in my heart that it was the right thing to do.

The great majority of the guerrillas did put down their weapons.

But some of them, less than a hundred, ignored my plea, with the result that they were pursued by the Nepalese army as they crossed from one side of the border to the other. Finally, they were caught in an ambush and met the violent deaths they must have been expecting. Thus ended one of the saddest episodes in the history of the Tibetan diaspora.



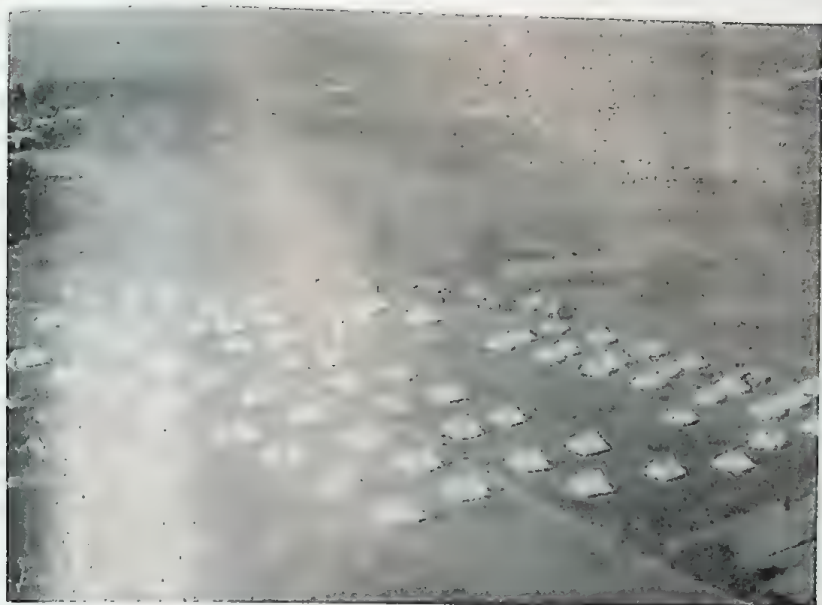
Taken in India just after my arrival, April 1959



With Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi, at the Prime Minister's Residence in Delhi, 7 September 1959

In prayer under the Bodhi Tree. Ling Rinpoche is on my left.

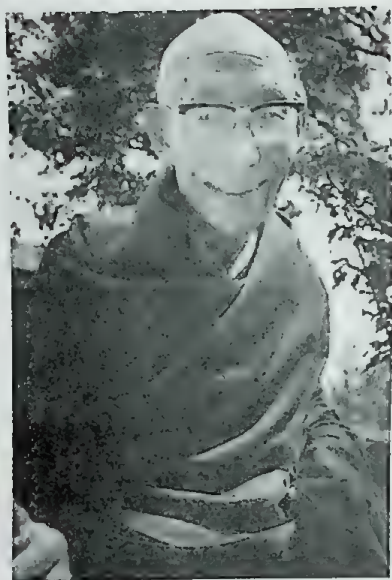




*One of the first refugee settlements
in India at an early stage*



Wearing ceremonial regalia



(Above left) Trijang Rinpoché, India 1978

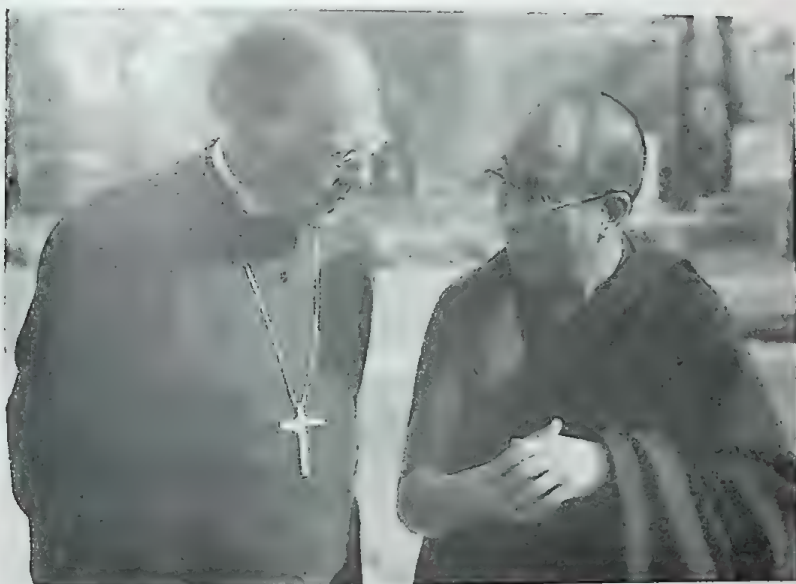
(Above) Ling Rinpoché, at about the same time



(Left) The Nechung oracle in trance

(Right above) With his Holiness Pope John Paul II, Italy 1982

(Right below) With Dr Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, Britain 1988





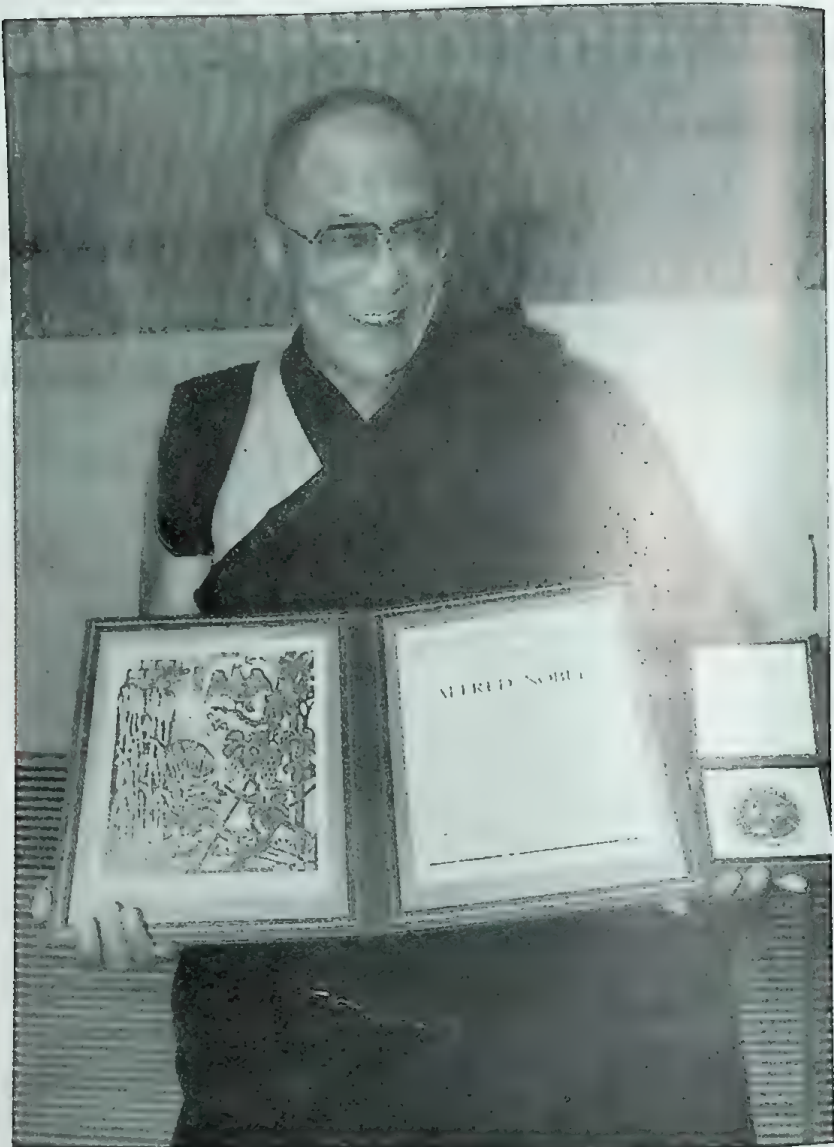
*(Left) Ganden monastery after its
destruction by Chinese troops*

*(Left below) Ruins of Toling monastery,
now used as a horse corral*

*(Right) The PLA deploy in Lhasa,
March 1989*

*(Below) Monks running for cover,
Lhasa, March 1989*





*Holding the medal and diploma of the Nobel
Prize for Peace, Oslo, 10 December 1989*

From East to West

○

I MADE my first journey outside India during the autumn of 1967, when I went to Japan and Thailand. Since then, I have travelled with increasing frequency – this despite the difficulties often imposed by my brothers and sisters in China. Unfortunately, although the great majority of my journeys overseas are entirely private (generally at the invitation of one of the Tibetan or Buddhist communities abroad), the Chinese always consider them to be political, and anyone who meets me is seen by the authorities in Peking to be making a political statement. For this reason, there have been times when leading public figures have been prevented from making my acquaintance for fear of incurring their government's or China's displeasure.

At the time of those first visits, the Vietnam War was at its height. I recall that at one point on the flight out, as we cruised at high altitude, I noticed another, larger aircraft climbing past us. I recognised it as a B-52 bomber. With great sorrow I realised that this plane must be about to shed its load not harmlessly over the sea but on to other human beings like myself. I was further dismayed to see that, even at 30,000 feet above the earth's surface, it is not possible to escape evidence of man's inhumanity to man.

On landing in Tokyo, I was pleased to find signs of man's better nature. The first thing I noticed was an extraordinary tidiness. Everything was far cleaner than I had ever seen before. I soon discovered that this emphasis on outward orderliness extended even to the food, which was always exquisitely presented. It seemed to me that according to Japanese sensibilities, its arrangement on

the plate was considered to be of greater importance than the taste. Another thing that struck me immediately was the huge number of cars and trucks that plied their way up and down the city streets, transporting people and goods throughout the day and night. Seeing this impressed on me the tremendous potential for good of modern technology. I was particularly interested to find that, although Japan has achieved great material advancement, she has done so without losing sight of her traditional culture and values.

Whilst in Japan, I was very happy to see a number of young Tibetan students studying there. I was also glad to meet some Japanese who spoke Tibetan and had a good knowledge of my homeland. As recently as the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Japanese scholars had come to Tibet to study. So it was a pleasure to re-establish, albeit as a refugee, links between our two countries.

My impressions of Thailand were quite different. I found the people there wonderfully easy-going. This was in contrast to Japan, where even the waiters struck me as formal. That said, there are certain rules of etiquette to be observed in Thailand which I found distinctly difficult. According to Thai custom, the laity should always show respect for the *Sangha*, as Buddhist monasticism is properly known. However, it is considered entirely wrong for a monk to acknowledge such reverence, even when a person prostrates him or herself. I found this extremely hard to get used to. Under normal circumstances, I always try to return greetings. And whilst I did my best to restrain myself, I often found my hand behaving independently!

Visiting Thailand on a subsequent occasion, this tradition presented me with an interesting problem when I was invited to lunch with the King. Should I or should I not shake his hand? He might consider it unseemly for me to do so. Nobody was quite sure. In the event, he came forward and shook my hand warmly.

My only other difficulty in that country was the heat which, even more than in southern India, was stunning. That and the mosquitoes. Together they made sleeping very difficult. On the positive side, some of the senior monks I was privileged to meet

were deeply impressive. As in Japan, there was much to discuss as our different traditions share many common practices – which helped me see that Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition is a very complete form of Buddhism.

In 1973, I made my first trip to Europe and Scandinavia. It lasted for over six weeks and took in eleven countries. By the end, I was completely exhausted. Yet I was exhilarated to have had the opportunity of seeing so many new places and of meeting so many new people. I was also pleased to renew some old acquaintances. It was especially good to see Heinrich Harrer once more. He was his usual, jovial self and his sense of humour was as coarse and earthy as ever. He had been to Dharamsala once, but it was many years since I had last seen him, and his yellow hair, about which I had always teased him when I was a boy, was now very grey. Otherwise, the years had not changed him much. His strong mountaineer's fingers still captivated me and, although he had collected even more injuries than when I knew him last, thanks to an accident whilst leading an expedition in New Guinea, he was altogether very full of himself.

My first stop was Rome, where I met His Holiness the Pope. As the aircraft came in to land, I was very curious to see whether the landscape offered any indications of the tremendous differences that are supposed to exist between East and West. Even though I had seen countless photographs of European cities, particularly in my collection of books about the First and Second World Wars, I was still not quite sure what to expect. So it was with relief that I saw the same trees and vegetation and the same signs of human habitation that I knew from the East. Things were obviously not so different, after all.

On landing, I went straight to Vatican City, where I found St Peter's Basilica in some ways reminiscent of the Potala, at least in terms of its size and great antiquity. On the other hand, the Swiss guards, in their very colourful uniforms, seemed quite comical. They looked almost like decorations. My talk with Pope Paul vi was very brief, but I took the opportunity to express to him my belief in the importance of spiritual values for all humanity, no

matter what the particular creed. He was in complete agreement with me and we parted on very good terms.

The following day I flew to Switzerland for a week, where I met some of the 200 children who had been adopted into Swiss families. I found them very shy and awkward in their behaviour towards me. Sadly, most of them had completely lost the ability to speak their native language. (However, on a subsequent visit, in 1979, I found the situation much improved. The children had taken lessons and spoke to me in broken Tibetan, rather like my own broken English.) Remembering their sad state six years previously, I was delighted to see their smiling faces and to discover that, as I had hoped, the people of Switzerland had greeted them with open arms. It was obvious that they had grown up in an atmosphere of love and kindness.

From Switzerland, I travelled to Holland, where one of the people I met was a rabbi. This was a particularly moving experience. Because of the language difficulties, we hardly exchanged any words, but there was no need. In his eyes I clearly saw all the terrible suffering of his people, and wept.

I spent only two days in the Netherlands and a few hours in Belgium before flying on to Ireland, then Norway, Sweden and Denmark, each for only a day or two. Time was far too short to gain more than the slightest impression of these places. But everywhere I went, I found the same kindness and hospitality and thirst for information about Tibet. It became clear to me that my country holds a special fascination for many people around the world. One of the particular joys of this energetic trip was the opportunity it gave me of thanking in person some of the many people who had organised aid to the Tibetan refugees. In Norway, Denmark and Sweden, for example, I visited the organisations which had made it possible for forty young Tibetan men and women to be trained as mechanics and agriculturalists.

The country in which I spent the most amount of time was the United Kingdom. I stayed for ten days and was pleased to find confirmation of my belief that, of all western countries, Britain has the closest links with Tibet. To my surprise, I met a number

of very old people who were actually able to speak to me in Tibetan. It turned out that they, or, in some cases, their parents, had been stationed in Tibet as officials at one time or another. One of these was Hugh Richardson, whom I had last seen about ten years previously when he came to Dharamsala.

While in Britain I met Sir Harold Macmillan, who impressed me very much. He seemed extraordinarily nice and had an air of authority combined with humility that was very striking. He also showed an interest in spiritual values. Another person whose acquaintance I made and who has since become a valued friend was Humphrey Carpenter, then Dean of Westminster, whose wife now always calls me 'My boy'.

Although in 1960 I saw an Indian newspaper report saying that President Eisenhower had indicated that he would receive the Dalai Lama if I went to America, an enquiry into the possibility of my going there in 1972 suggested that there might be some difficulty in obtaining a visa. Naturally, I was very curious to see the country that is said to be both the richest and freest nation on earth, but it was not until 1979 that I was able to do so.

On arrival in New York, where I went first, I was immediately impressed by an atmosphere of liberty. The people I met seemed very friendly and open and relaxed. But at the same time, I could not help noticing how dirty and untidy some parts of the city were. I was also very sorry to see so many tramps and homeless people taking shelter in doorways. It amazed me that there could be any beggars in this vastly rich and prosperous land. I was reminded of what my Communist friends had told me about the injustices of the 'American Imperialist Paper Tiger', how it exploits the poor for the benefit of the rich. Another surprise was to discover that although, like many Easterners, I held the view that the US was the champion of freedom, actually very few people had any knowledge of the fate of Tibet. Now, as I have come to know the country better, I have begun to see that, in some ways, the American political system does not live up to its own ideals.

None of this is to say that I did not hugely enjoy that first visit,

nor that I did not see much that impressed me. I particularly enjoyed addressing many student audiences, where I found continual expressions of goodwill. No matter how badly I expressed myself in English, the response I had was always warm, whether people understood everything or not. This helped me to overcome my shyness of speaking in public using this foreign language and helped me to grow in confidence, for which I am very grateful. However, I now wonder whether this kindness did not contribute in some way to a loss of determination on my part to improve my English further. For although I now made up my mind to do so, as soon as I returned to Dharamsala, I found that my resolve had vanished entirely! The result is that I continue on the whole to prefer talking to German and French and other European people, many of whom speak English as I do, ungrammatically and with a heavy accent. Least of all do I enjoy speaking it with the English themselves, many of whom strike me as very reserved and formal.

Since those first visits to different parts of the world, I have been back many times. Especially, I welcome the opportunity offered by travel to meet and talk with people from different walks of life – some poor, some rich, some well educated, some ill educated, some who are religious, many who are not. So far, I have received only support for my belief that wherever you go, people everywhere are basically the same, despite certain superficial differences. They all, like myself, seek happiness: no one wants suffering. Furthermore, everyone appreciates affection and at the same time has the potential for showing affection to others. With this in mind, I have found that friendship and understanding can develop.

Overall I have found much that is impressive about western society. In particular, I admire its energy and creativity and hunger for knowledge. On the other hand, a number of things about the western way of life cause me concern. One thing I have noticed is an inclination for people to think in terms of 'black and white' and 'either, or', which ignores the facts of interdependence and relativity. They have a tendency to lose sight of the grey areas which inevitably exist between two points of view.

Another observation is that there are a lot of people in the West who live very comfortably in large cities, but virtually isolated from the broad mass of humanity. I find this very strange – that under the circumstance of such material well-being and with thousands of brothers and sisters for neighbours, so many people appear able to show their true feelings only to their cats and dogs. This indicates a lack of spiritual values, I feel. Part of the problem here is perhaps the intense competitiveness of life in these countries, which seems to breed fear and a deep sense of insecurity.

For me, this sense of alienation is symbolised by something I once saw at the home of a very rich man whose guest I was on one of my trips abroad. It was a very large private house, obviously designed expressly for convenience and comfort, and fitted with every kind of appliance. However, when I went into the bathroom, I could not help noticing two large bottles of pills on the shelf above the hand basin. One contained tranquillisers, the other sleeping pills. This was proof, too, that material prosperity alone cannot bring about lasting happiness.

As I have already said, I usually go abroad at the invitation of others. Very often, I am also asked to address groups of people. When this happens, my approach is threefold. Firstly, as a human being, I talk about what I have termed Universal Responsibility. By this I mean the responsibility that we all have for each other and for all sentient beings and also for all of Nature.

Secondly, as a Buddhist monk I try to contribute what I can towards better harmony and understanding between different religions. As I have said, it is my firm belief that all religions aim at making people better human beings and that, despite philosophical differences, some of them fundamental, they all aim at helping humanity to find happiness. This does not mean that I advocate any sort of world religion or 'super religion'. Rather, I look on religion as medicine. For different complaints, doctors will prescribe different remedies. Therefore, because not everyone's spiritual 'illness' is the same, different spiritual medicines are required.

Finally, as a Tibetan, and furthermore as the Dalai Lama, I talk

about my own country, people and culture whenever anyone shows interest in these matters. However, although I am greatly encouraged when people do show concern for my homeland and my suffering fellow countrymen and women in occupied Tibet, and although it gives fuel to my determination to continue the fight for justice, I do not consider those who support our cause to be 'pro-Tibet'. Instead, I consider them to be pro-Justice.

One of the things that I have noticed whilst travelling is the amount of interest shown by young people in the things that I talk about. This enthusiasm could, I suppose, be due to the fact that my insistence on absolute informality appeals to them. For my own part, I greatly value exchanges with younger audiences. They ask all sorts of questions concerning everything from the Buddhist theory of Emptiness, through my ideas about cosmology and modern physics, to sex and morality. Those questions which are unexpected and complicated are the ones I appreciate most. They can help me a great deal as I am compelled to take an interest in something that might not otherwise have occurred to me. It becomes a bit like debating.

Another observation is that many of the people I talk to, especially in the West, have a highly sceptical cast of mind. This can be very positive, I feel, but with the proviso that it is used as the basis for further enquiry.

Perhaps the most sceptical of all are the journalists and reporters with whom, because of my position as the Dalai Lama, I inevitably have a great deal of contact, especially when I travel. However, although it is often said that these men and women from the world's free press are very tough and aggressive, I have found that in general this is not so. The majority turn out to be friendly, even if the atmosphere is sometimes a little tense at first. Just occasionally, a question and answer session will turn into a serious argument. If this happens, I usually stop when it comes to politics, which I try to avoid. People have a right to their own opinions and I do not see it as my role to try to change their minds.

On a recent trip abroad, exactly this happened. After the press conference was over, some people felt that the Dalai Lama had

not given good answers. However, I was not concerned. People must decide for themselves whether or not the Tibetan cause is a just one.

Much worse than the odd unsatisfactory encounter with newspaper people have been a couple of incidents involving television appearances. On one occasion, when I was in France, I was invited to speak on a live news programme. It was explained that the presenter would speak to me directly in French. What he was saying would be simultaneously translated into English for me, via a small earphone. But in the event, I was unable to understand a word of what came out.

On another occasion, when I was in Washington, I was asked to do a similar thing, only this time I was alone in the studio. The interviewer spoke to me from New York. I was told to look directly at a screen showing not his face, but my own. This completely unsettled me. I found it so disconcerting to be talking to myself that I was lost for words!

Whenever I go abroad, I try to contact as many other religious practitioners as possible, with a view to fostering inter-faith dialogue. On one of my foreign visits, I met some Christians with a similar desire. This led to a monastic exchange whereby for a few weeks some Tibetan monks went to a Christian monastery, whilst a similar number of Christian monks came out to India. It proved to be an extremely useful exercise for both parties. In particular, it enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of other people's way of thinking.

Amongst the many religious personalities that I have met, I will single out a few. The present Pope is a man I hold in high regard. To begin with, our somewhat similar backgrounds give us an immediate common ground. The first time we met, he struck me as a very practical sort of person, very broad-minded and open. I have no doubt that he is a great spiritual leader. Any man who can call out 'Brother' to his would-be assassin, as Pope John Paul did, must be a highly evolved spiritual practitioner.

Mother Teresa, whom I met at Delhi airport on my way back from a conference at Oxford, England, during 1988 (which she

had also attended), is someone for whom I have the deepest respect. I was at once struck by her demeanour of absolute humility. From the Buddhist point of view she could be considered to be a Bodhisattva.

Another person whom I think of as a highly evolved spiritual master is a Catholic monk I met at his hermitage near Monserrat in Spain. He had spent a great many years there, just like an Eastern sage, surviving off nothing more than bread and water and a little tea. He spoke very little English – even less than me – but from his eyes I could see that I was in the presence of an extraordinary person, a true practitioner of religion. When I asked him what his meditations were about, he answered simply, 'Love'. Since then, I have always thought of him as a modern Milarepa, after the Tibetan master of that name who spent much of his life hidden away in a cave, meditating and composing spiritual verses.

One religious leader with whom I have had several good conversations is the outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie (whose courageous emissary, Terry Waite, I always remember in my prayers). We share the view that religion and politics do mix and both agree that it is the clear duty of religion to serve humanity, that it must not ignore reality. It is not sufficient for religious people to be involved with prayer. Rather, they are morally obliged to contribute all they can to solving the world's problems.

I remember once an Indian politician taking me to task over this view. He said to me, quite humbly, 'Oh, but we are politicians, not religious people. Our first concern is with serving people through politics,' to which I replied, 'Politicians need religion even more than a hermit on retreat. If a hermit acts out of bad motivation, he harms no one but himself. But if someone who can directly influence the whole of society acts with bad motivation, then a great number of people will be adversely affected.' I find no contradiction at all between politics and religion. For what is religion? As far as I am concerned, any deed done with good motivation is a religious act. On the other hand, a gathering of people in a temple or church who do not have good motivation

are not performing a religious act when they pray together.

Although I do not seek them out, I have also made the acquaintance of a number of politicians whilst on my travels. One of these was Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, whom I have met four times. Like Nehru, on the occasion of our first private meeting, I found that he seemed to have some difficulty concentrating on what I had to say. However, on the last three occasions, we had long and frank discussions about Tibet and China, during which Mr Heath expressed his enthusiasm for Chinese successes in agriculture. As someone who has visited Tibet more recently than I have, he also said that I should realise that many changes have taken place in my homeland – particularly with regard to support for the Dalai Lama. In his opinion, it is fast vanishing, especially amongst the younger generation.

This was a very interesting point of view to hear from such a senior politician, moreover one who has had extensive dealings with Peking. Nevertheless, I explained that my concern was not for the Dalai Lama's position but for the rights of the six million who live in occupied Tibet. Having said this, I told him that as far as I was aware, support for the Dalai Lama amongst young people in Tibet was at its highest level ever and that my exile had united the Tibetan people in a way that had never been possible before.

We still keep in touch, despite our differences of opinion, and I continue to value Mr Heath as a man with great knowledge of world affairs. Yet at the same time, I am highly impressed at the effectiveness of Chinese disinformation and deception even on such an experienced person as he is.

An interesting phenomenon of the past two decades or so has been the rapid growth of interest in Buddhism amongst western nations. I see no special significance in this, although of course I am very happy that there should now be more than five hundred centres of Tibetan Buddhism worldwide, many of them in Europe and North America. I am always glad if someone derives benefit from adopting Buddhist practices. However, when it actually comes to

people changing their religion, I usually advise them to think the matter through very carefully. Rushing into a new religion can give rise to mental conflict and is nearly always difficult.

Nevertheless, even in those places where Buddhism is quite new, I have, for the benefit of those wishing to participate, performed ceremonies on a few occasions. For example, I have given the *Kalachakra* initiation in more than one country outside India – my motive for doing so being not only to give some insight into the Tibetan way of life and thinking, but also to make an effort, on an inner level, in favour of world peace.

Whilst on the subject of the spread of Buddhism in the West, I want to say that I have noticed some tendency towards sectarianism amongst new practitioners. This is absolutely wrong. Religion should never become a source of conflict, a further factor of division within the human community. For my own part, I have even, on the basis of my deep respect for the contribution that other faiths can make towards human happiness, participated in the ceremonies of other religions. And, following the example of a great many Tibetan lamas both ancient and modern, I continue to take teachings from as many different traditions as possible. For whilst it is true that some schools of thought felt it desirable for a practitioner to stay within his or her own tradition, people have always been free to do as they think fit. Furthermore, Tibetan society has always been highly tolerant of other people's beliefs. Not only was there a flourishing Muslim community in Tibet, but also there were a number of Christian missions which were admitted without hindrance. I am therefore firmly in favour of a liberal approach. Sectarianism is poison.

As for my own religious practice, I try to live my life pursuing what I call the Bodhisattva ideal. According to Buddhist thought, a Bodhisattva is someone on the path to Buddhahood who dedicates themselves entirely to helping all other sentient beings towards release from suffering. The word Bodhisattva can best be understood by translating the *Bodhi* and *Sattva* separately: *Bodhi* means the understanding or wisdom of the ultimate nature of reality, and a *Sattva* is someone who is motivated by universal compassion.

The Bodhisattva ideal is thus the aspiration to practise infinite compassion with infinite wisdom. As a means of helping myself in this quest, I choose to be a Buddhist monk. There are 253 rules of Tibetan monasticism (364 for nuns) and by observing them as closely as I can, I free myself from many of the distractions and worries of life. Some of these rules mainly deal with etiquette, such as the physical distance a monk should walk behind the abbot of his monastery; others are concerned with behaviour. The four root vows concern simple prohibitions: namely that a monk must not kill, steal or lie about his spiritual attainment. He must also be strictly celibate. If he breaks any one of these, he is no longer a monk.

I am sometimes asked whether this vow of celibacy is really desirable and indeed whether it is really possible. Suffice to say that its practice is not simply a matter of suppressing sexual desires. On the contrary, it is necessary fully to accept the existence of these desires and to transcend them by the power of reasoning. When successful, the result on the mind can be very beneficial. The trouble with sexual desire is that it is a blind desire. To say 'I want to have sex with this person' is to express a desire which is not intellectually directed in the way that 'I want to eradicate poverty in the world' is an intellectually directed desire. Furthermore, the gratification of sexual desire can only ever give temporary satisfaction. Thus as Nagarjuna, the great Indian scholar, said:

'When you have an itch, you scratch.

But not to itch at all

Is better than any amount of scratching.'

Regarding my actual daily practice, I spend, at the very least, five and a half hours per day in prayer, meditation and study. On top of this, I also pray whenever I can during odd moments of the day, for example over meals and whilst travelling. In this last case, I have three main reasons for doing so: firstly, it contributes towards fulfilment of my daily duty; secondly, it helps to pass the time productively; thirdly, it assuages fear! More seriously though, as a Buddhist, I see no distinction between religious practice and

daily life. Religious practice is a twenty-four-hour occupation. In fact, there are prayers prescribed for every activity from waking to washing, eating and even sleeping. For Tantric practitioners, those exercises which are undertaken during deep sleep and in the dream state are the most important preparation for death.

However, for myself, early morning is the best time for practice. The mind is at its freshest and sharpest then. I therefore get up at around four o'clock. On waking, I begin the day with the recitation of *mantras*. I then drink hot water and take my medicine before making prostrations in salutation of the Buddhas for about half an hour. The purpose of this is twofold. Firstly, it increases one's own merit (assuming proper motivation) and secondly, it is good exercise. After my prostrations, I wash – saying prayers as I do so. Then I generally go outside for a walk, during which I make further recitations, until breakfast at around 5.15 am. I allow about half an hour for this meal (which is quite substantial) and whilst eating read scriptures.

From 5.45 am until around 8.00 am, I meditate, pausing only to listen to the 6.30 news bulletin of the BBC World Service. Then, from 8.00 am until noon, I study Buddhist philosophy. Between then and lunch at 12.30, I might read either official papers or newspapers, but during the meal itself I again read scripture. At 1 pm I go to my office, where I deal with government and other matters and give audiences until 5.00 pm. This is followed by another short period of prayer and meditation as soon as I get back home. If there is anything worthwhile on television, I watch it now before having tea at 6.00 pm. Finally, after tea, during which I read scripture once more, I say prayers until 8.30 or 9.00 pm, when I go to bed. Then follows very sound sleep.

Of course, there are variations to this routine. Sometimes during the morning I will participate in a *puja* or, in the afternoon, I will deliver a teaching. But, all the same, I very rarely have to modify my daily practice – that is my morning and evening prayers and meditation.

The rationale behind this practice is quite simple. During the first part of it when I make prostrations, I am 'taking refuge' in

the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha*. The next stage is to develop *Bodhichitta* or a Good Heart. This is done firstly by recognising the impermanence of all things and secondly by realising the true nature of being which is suffering. On the basis of these two considerations, it is possible to generate altruism.

To engender altruism, or compassion, in myself, I practise certain mental exercises which promote love towards all sentient beings, including especially my so-called enemies. For example, I remind myself that it is the actions of human beings rather than human beings themselves that make them my enemy. Given a change of behaviour, that same person could easily become a good friend.

The remainder of my meditation is concerned with *Sunya* or Emptiness, during which I concentrate on the most subtle meaning of Interdependence. Part of this practice involves what is termed 'deity yoga', *lhai naljor*, during which I use different *mandalas* to visualise myself as a succession of different 'deities'. (This should not, however, be taken to imply belief in independent external beings.) In so doing, I focus my mind to the point where it is no longer preoccupied with the data produced by the senses. This is not a trance, as my mind remains fully alert; rather it is an exercise in pure consciousness. What exactly I mean by this is hard to explain: just as it is difficult for a scientist to explain in words what is meant by the term 'space-time'. Neither language nor every-day experience can really communicate the experience of 'pure mind'. Suffice to say that it is not an easy practice. It takes many years to master.

One important aspect of my daily practice is its concern with the idea of death. To my mind, there are two things that, in life, you can do about death. Either you can choose to ignore it, in which case you may have some success in making the idea of it go away for a limited period of time, or you can confront the prospect of your own death and try to analyse it and, in so doing, try to minimise some of the inevitable suffering that it causes. Neither way can you actually overcome it. However, as a Buddhist, I view

death as a normal process of life, I accept it as a reality that will occur whilst I am in *Samsara*. Knowing that I cannot escape it, I see no point in worrying about it. I hold the view that death is rather like changing one's clothes when they are torn and old. It is not an end in itself. Yet death is unpredictable – you do not know when and how it will take place. So it is only sensible to take certain precautions before it actually happens.

As a Buddhist, I further believe that the actual experience of death is very important. It is then that the most profound and beneficial experiences can come about. For this reason, many of the great spiritual masters take release from earthly existence – that is, they die – whilst meditating. When this happens, it is often the case that their bodies do not begin to decay until long after they are clinically dead.

My spiritual 'routine' changes only when I undertake a retreat. On these occasions, in addition to my normal daily practice, I also perform special meditations. This takes the place of my usual period of meditation and of my study of Buddhist philosophy between breakfast and noon. These I shift to the afternoon. After tea, there is no change. However, there are no hard and fast rules. Sometimes, because of external pressures, I am compelled to deal with official matters, or even to give audiences whilst on retreat. In that case, I may sacrifice some sleep in order to be able to fit everything in.

The purpose of undertaking a retreat is to enable a person to concentrate fully on inner development. As a rule, my opportunities for doing so are very limited. I am lucky if I can find two periods of a week in any given year, although occasionally I have managed a month or so. In 1973, I had a strong desire to undertake a three-year retreat, but unfortunately circumstances did not permit. I would still like very much to do this one day. In the meantime, I have to make do with just short battery-charging sessions, as I call them. A week is not long enough to make any actual progress or to develop in any way, but it is just sufficient to allow me to recharge myself. It takes much longer periods actually to train the mind to any extent. This is one of the reasons

why I consider myself to be very much in the primary grade of spiritual development.

Of course, one of the main reasons I have so little time for retreats is the amount of travelling that I do nowadays, though I do not regret this. By travelling, I am able to share my experiences and hope with many more people than would otherwise be possible. And if, when I do so, it is always from the viewpoint of my being a Buddhist monk, this does not mean I believe that it is only by practising Buddhism that people can bring happiness to themselves and others. On the contrary, I believe that this is possible even for people who have no religion at all. I only use Buddhism as an example because everything in life has confirmed my belief in its validity. Besides, as a monk since the age of six, I have some knowledge in this field!

Of 'Magic and Mystery'

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I AM OFTEN asked questions about the so-called magical aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. Many westerners want to know whether the books on Tibet by people like Lobsang Rampa and some others, in which they speak about occult practices, are true. They also ask me whether Shambala (a legendary country referred to by certain scriptures and supposed to lie hidden among the northern wastes of Tibet) really exists. Then there was the letter I received from an eminent scientist, during the early 1960s, saying he had heard that certain high lamas were capable of performing supernatural feats and asking whether he could conduct experiments to determine whether this was so.

In reply to the first two questions, I usually say that most of these books are works of imagination and that Shambala exists, yes, but not in any conventional sense. At the same time, it would be wrong to deny that some Tantric practices do genuinely give rise to mysterious phenomena. For this reason I half considered writing to the scientist to say that what he had heard was correct and, further, that I was in favour of experimentation; but I regretted to have to inform him that the person on whom these experiments could be performed had not yet been born! Actually, there were at that time various practical reasons why it was not possible to participate in enquiries of this sort.

Since then, however, I have agreed to a number of scientific investigations into the nature of certain specific practices. The first of these was carried out by Dr Herbert Benson, who is presently head of the Department of Behavioural Medicine at Harvard Medical School in America. When we met during my

1979 visit, he told me that he was working on an analysis of what he terms the 'relaxation response', a physiological phenomenon encountered when a person enters a meditative state. He felt that it would further understanding of this process if he were able to conduct experiments on highly advanced practitioners of meditation.

As a strong believer in the value of modern science, I decided to let him proceed, though not without some hesitation. I knew that many Tibetans were uneasy about the idea. They felt that the practices in question should be kept confidential because they derive from secret doctrines. Against this consideration I set the possibility that the results of such an investigation might benefit not only science but also religious practitioners and could therefore be of some general benefit to humankind.

In the event, Dr Benson was satisfied that he had found something extraordinary. (His findings were published in several books and scientific journals, including *Nature*.) He came out to India with two assistants and several pieces of sophisticated equipment and conducted experiments on some monks in hermitages near to Dharamsala and in Ladakh and Sikkim, further north.

The monks in question were practitioners of *Tum-mo* yoga, which is designed to demonstrate proficiency in particular Tantric disciplines. By meditating on the *chakras* (energy centres) and the *nadis* (energy channels), the practitioner is able to control and prevent temporarily the activity of the grosser levels of consciousness, permitting him or her to experience the subtler levels. According to Buddhist thought, there are many levels of consciousness. The grosser pertain to ordinary perception – touch, sight, smell and so forth – whilst the subtlest are those which are apprehended at the point of death. One of the aims of *Tantra* is to enable the practitioner to 'experience' death, for it is then that the most powerful spiritual realisations can come about.

When the grosser levels of consciousness are suppressed, physiological phenomena can be observed. In Dr Benson's experiments, these included the raising of body temperatures (as measured

internally by rectal thermometer and externally by skin thermometer) by up to 18° Fahrenheit (10 Centigrade). These increases allowed the monks to dry out sheets, soaked in cold water and draped round them, even though the ambient temperature was well below freezing. Dr Benson also witnessed, and took similar measurements from, monks sitting naked on snow. He found they could remain still throughout the night without any loss of body temperature. During these sessions, he also noted that the practitioner's oxygen intake decreased to around seven breaths per minute.

Our knowledge of the human body and how it works is not yet sufficient to offer an explanation of what is happening here. Dr Benson believes that the mental processes involved may enable the meditator to burn 'brown fat' deposits in the body – a phenomenon previously thought to be confined to hibernating animals. But whatever mechanisms are at work, what interests me most is the clear indication that there are things about which modern science could learn from Tibetan culture. What is more, I believe that there are several other areas of our experience which could usefully be investigated. For example, I hope one day to organise some sort of scientific enquiry into the phenomenon of oracles, which remain an important part of the Tibetan way of life.

Before I speak about them in detail, however, I must stress that the purpose of oracles is not, as might be supposed, simply to foretell the future. This is only part of what they do. In addition, they can be called upon as protectors and in some cases they are used as healers. But their principal function is to assist people in their practice of the *Dharma*. Another point to remember is that the word 'oracle' is itself misleading. It implies that there are people who possess oracular powers. This is wrong. In the Tibetan tradition there are merely certain men and women who act as mediums between the natural and the spiritual realms, the name for them being *kuten*, which means, literally, 'the physical basis'. Also, I should point out that whilst it is usual to speak of oracles as if they were people, this is done for convenience. More accurately, they can be described as 'spirits' which are associated with

particular things (for example a statue), people and places. This should not be taken to imply belief in the existence of external independent entities, however.

In former times there must have been many hundred oracles throughout Tibet. Few survive, but the most important – those used by the Tibetan Government – still exist. Of these, the principal one is known as the Nechung oracle. Through him manifests Dorje Drakden, one of the protector divinities of the Dalai Lama.

Nechung originally came to Tibet with a descendant of the Indian sage Dharmapala, settling at a place in Central Asia called Bata Hor. During the reign of King Trisong Detsen in the eighth century AD, he was appointed protector of Samye monastery by the Indian Tantric master and supreme spiritual guardian of Tibet, Padmasambhava. (Samye was in fact the first Buddhist monastery to be built in Tibet and was founded by another Indian scholar, the abbot Shantarakshita.) Subsequently, the second Dalai Lama developed a close relationship with Nechung – who had by this time become closely associated with Drepung monastery – and thereafter Dorje Drakden was appointed personal protector of succeeding Dalai Lamas.

For hundreds of years now, it has been traditional for the Dalai Lama, and the Government, to consult Nechung during the New Year festivals. In addition, he might well be called upon at other times if either have specific queries. I myself have dealings with him several times a year. This may sound far-fetched to twentieth-century western readers. Even some Tibetans, mostly those who consider themselves 'progressive', have misgivings about my continued use of this ancient method of intelligence gathering. But I do so for the simple reason that as I look back over the many occasions when I have asked questions of the oracle, on each one of them time has proved that his answer was correct. This is not to say that I rely solely on the oracle's advice. I do not. I seek his opinion in the same way as I seek the opinion of my Cabinet and just as I seek the opinion of my own conscience. I consider the gods to be my 'upper house'. The *Kashag* constitutes my lower

house. Like any other leader, I consult both before making a decision on affairs of state. And sometimes, in addition to Nechung's counsel, I also take into consideration certain prophecies.

In one respect, the responsibility of Nechung and the responsibility of the Dalai Lama towards Tibet are the same, though we act in different ways. My task, that of leadership, is peaceful. His, in his capacity as protector and defender, is wrathful. However, although our functions are similar, my relationship with Nechung is that of commander to lieutenant: I never bow down to him. It is for Nechung to bow to the Dalai Lama. Yet we are also very close, friends almost. When I was small, it was touching. Nechung liked me a lot and always took great care of me. For example, if he noticed that I had dressed carelessly or improperly, he would come over and rearrange my shirt, adjust my robe and so on.

But despite this sort of familiarity, Nechung has always shown respect for me. Even when his relations with the Government have deteriorated, as they did during the last few years of the Regency, he invariably responds enthusiastically whenever asked anything about me. At the same time, his replies to questions about government policy can be crushing. Sometimes he just responds with a burst of sarcastic laughter. I well remember a particular incident that occurred when I was about fourteen. Nechung was asked a question about China. Rather than answer it directly, the *kuten* turned towards the East and began bending forward violently. It was frightening to watch, knowing that this movement combined with the weight of the massive helmet he wore on his head would be enough to snap his neck. He did it at least fifteen times, leaving no one in any doubt about where the danger lay.

Dealing with Nechung is by no means easy. It takes time and patience during each encounter before he will open up. He is very reserved and austere, just as you would imagine a grand old man of ancient times to be. Nor does he bother with minor matters: his interest is only in the larger issues, so it pays to frame questions accordingly. He also has definite likes and dislikes, but he does not show them very readily.

Nechung has his own monastery in Dharamsala, but usually he comes to me. On formal occasions, the *kuten* is dressed in an elaborate costume consisting of several layers of clothing topped by a highly ornate robe of golden silk brocade, which is covered with ancient designs in red and blue and green and yellow. On his chest he wears a circular mirror which is surrounded by clusters of turquoise and amethyst, its polished steel flashing with the Sanskrit *mantra* corresponding to Dorje Drakden. Before the proceedings begin, he also puts on a sort of harness, which supports four flags and three victory banners. Altogether, this outfit weighs more than seventy pounds and the medium, when not in trance, can hardly walk in it.

The ceremony begins with chanted invocations and prayers, accompanied by the urgings of horns, cymbals and drums. After a short while, the *kuten* enters his trance, having been supported until then by his assistants, who now help him over to a small stool set before my throne. Then, as the first prayer cycle concludes and the second begins, his trance begins to deepen. At this point, a huge helmet is placed on his head. This item weighs approximately thirty pounds, though in former times it weighed over eighty.

Now the *kuten*'s face transforms, becoming rather wild before puffing up to give him an altogether strange appearance, with bulging eyes and swollen cheeks. His breathing begins to shorten and he starts to hiss violently. Then, momentarily, his respiration stops. At this point the helmet is tied in place with a knot so tight that it would undoubtedly strangle the *kuten* if something very real were not happening. The possession is now complete and the mortal frame of the medium expands visibly.

Next, he leaps up with a start and, grabbing a ritual sword from one of his attendants, begins to dance with slow, dignified, yet somehow menacing, steps. He then comes in front of me and either prostrates fully or bows deeply from the waist until his helmet touches the ground before springing back up, the weight of his regalia counting for nothing. The volcanic energy of the deity can barely be contained within the earthly frailty of the

kuten, who moves and gestures as if his body were made of rubber and driven by a coiled spring of enormous power.

There follows an interchange between Nechung and myself, where he makes ritual offerings to me. I then ask any personal questions I have for him. After replying, he returns to his stool and listens to questions put by members of the Government. Before giving answers to these the *kuten* begins to dance again, thrashing his sword above his head. He looks like a magnificent, fierce Tibetan warrior chieftain of old.

As soon as Dorje Drakden has finished speaking, the *kuten* makes a final offering before collapsing, a rigid and lifeless form, signifying the end of the possession. Simultaneously, the knot holding his helmet in place is untied in a great hurry by his assistants, who then carry him out to recover whilst the ceremony continues.

Surprising as it may seem, the oracle's replies to questions are rarely vague. As in the case of my escape from Lhasa, he is often very specific. But I suppose that it would be difficult for any scientific investigation either to prove or disprove conclusively the validity of his pronouncements. The same would surely be true of other areas of Tibetan experience, for example the matter of *tulkus*. Nevertheless, I hope one day that some sort of enquiry into both phenomena will be made.

Actually, the business of identifying *tulkus* is more logical than it may at first appear. Given the Buddhist belief that the principle of rebirth is fact, and given that the whole purpose of reincarnation is to enable a being to continue its efforts on behalf of all suffering sentient beings, it stands to reason that it should be possible to identify individual cases. This enables them to be educated and placed in the world so that they can continue their work as soon as possible.

Mistakes in this identification process can certainly be made, but the lives of the great majority of *tulkus* (of whom there are presently a few hundred known, although in Tibet before the Chinese invasion there were probably a few thousand) are adequate testimony of its efficacy.

As I have said, the whole purpose of reincarnation is to facilitate the continuity of a being's work. This fact has great implications when it comes to searching for the successor of a particular person. For example, whilst my efforts in general are directed towards helping all sentient beings, in particular they are directed towards helping my fellow Tibetans. Therefore, if I die before Tibetans regain their freedom, it is only logical to assume that I will be born outside Tibet. Of course, it could be that by then my people will have no use for a Dalai Lama, in which case they will not bother to search for me. So I might take rebirth as an insect, or an animal – whatever would be of most value to the largest number of sentient beings.

The way that the identification process is carried out is also less mysterious than might be imagined. It begins as a simple process of elimination. Say, for instance, we are looking for the reincarnation of a particular monk. First it must be established when and where that monk died. Then, considering that the new incarnation will usually be conceived a year or so after the death of its predecessor – these lengths of time we know from experience – a timetable is drawn up. Thus, if Lama X dies in year Y, his next incarnation will probably be born around eighteen months to two years later. In the year Y plus five, the child is likely to be between three and four years old: the field has narrowed already.

Next, the most likely place for the reincarnation to appear is established. This is usually quite easy. First, will it be inside or outside Tibet? If outside, there are a limited number of places where it is likely – the Tibetan communities of India, Nepal or Switzerland, for example. After that, it must be decided in which town the child is most likely to be found. Generally this is done by referring to the life of the previous incarnation.

Having narrowed the options and established parameters in the way I have shown, the next step is usually to assemble a search party. This need not necessarily mean that a group of people is sent out as if they were looking for treasure. Usually it is sufficient to ask various people in the community to look out for a child of between three and four who might be a candidate. Often there

are helpful clues, such as unusual phenomena at the time of the child's birth; or the child may exhibit peculiar characteristics.

Sometimes two or three or more possibilities will emerge at this stage. Occasionally, a search party is not required at all because the previous incarnation has left detailed information right down to the name of his successor and the name of his successor's parents. But this is rare. Other times, the monk's followers may have clear dreams or visions about where to find his successor. On the other hand, one high lama recently directed that there should be no search for his own rebirth. He said that whoever seemed likely to serve the Buddha *Dharma* and his community best should be installed as his successor, rather than for anyone to worry about an accurate identification. There are no hard and fast rules.

If it happens that several children are put forward as candidates, it is usual for someone well known to the previous incarnation to conduct a final examination. Frequently, this person will be recognised by one of the children, which is strong evidence of proof, but sometimes marks on the body are also taken into consideration.

In some cases, the identification process involves consulting one of the oracles or someone who has powers of *ngon shé* (clairvoyance). One of the methods that these people use is *Ta*, whereby the practitioner looks into a mirror in which he or she might see the actual child, or a building, or perhaps a written name. I call this 'ancient television'. It corresponds to the visions that people had at Lake Lhamoi Lhatso, where Reting Rinpoché saw the letters *Ah*, *Ka* and *Ma* and the views of a monastery and a house when he began the search for me.

Sometimes, I myself am called upon to direct the search for a reincarnation. In these circumstances it is my responsibility to make the final decision on whether a given candidate has been correctly chosen. I should say here that I have no powers of clairvoyance. I have had neither the time nor the opportunity to develop them, although I have reason to believe that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama did have some ability in this sphere.

As an example of how I do this, I will relate the story of Ling

Rinpoché, my Senior Tutor. I always had the greatest respect for Ling Rinpoché, although when I was a child I only had to see his servant to become afraid – and whenever I heard his familiar footsteps, my heart missed a beat. But, in time, I came to value him as one of my greatest and closest friends. When he died not long ago, I felt that life without him at my side would be very difficult. He had become a rock on which I could lean.

I was in Switzerland, in the late summer of 1983, when I first heard of his final illness: he had suffered a stroke and become paralysed. This news disturbed me very much. Yet, as a Buddhist, I knew there was not much use in worrying. As soon as I could, I returned to Dharamsala, where I found him still alive, but in a bad physical state. Yet his mind was as sharp as ever, thanks to a lifetime of assiduous mental training. His condition remained stable for several months before deteriorating quite suddenly. He entered a coma from which he never emerged and died on 25 December 1983. But, as if any further evidence of his being a remarkable person were needed, his body did not begin to decay until thirteen days after he was pronounced dead, despite the hot climate. It was as if he still inhabited his body, even though clinically it was without life.

When I look back at the manner of his demise, I am quite certain that Ling Rinpoché's illness, drawn out as it was over a long period, was entirely deliberate, in order to help me get used to being without him. However, that is only half the story. Because we are speaking of Tibetans, the tale continues happily. Ling Rinpoché's reincarnation has since been found, and he is presently a very bright and naughty boy of three. His discovery was one of those where the child clearly recognises a member of the search party. Despite his being only eighteen months old, he actually called the person by name and went forward to him, smiling. Subsequently he correctly identified several other of his predecessor's acquaintances.

When I met the boy for the first time, I had no doubts about his identity. He behaved in a way that made it obvious he knew me, though he also showed the utmost respect. On that first

occasion, I gave little Ling Rinpoché a large bar of chocolate. He stood impassively holding on to it, arm extended and head bowed all the time he was in my presence. I hardly think any other infant would have kept something sweet untasted and remained standing so formally. Then, when I received the boy at my residence and he was brought to the door, he acted just as his predecessor had done. It was plain that he remembered his way round. Moreover, when he came into my study, he showed immediate familiarity with one of my attendants, who was at the time recovering from a broken leg. First, this tiny person gravely presented him with a *kata* and then, full of laughter and childish giggles, he picked up one of Lobsang Gawa's crutches and ran round and round carrying it as if it were a flagpole.

Another impressive story about the boy concerns the time he was taken, at the age of only two, to Bodh Gaya, where I was due to give teachings. Without anyone telling him of its whereabouts, he found my bedroom, having scrambled on his hands and knees up the stairs, and laid a *kata* on my bed. Today, Ling Rinpoché is already reciting scriptures, though it remains to be seen whether, when he has learned to read, he will turn out to be like some of the young *tulkus* who memorise texts at astonishing speed, as if they were simply picking up where they had left off. I have known a number of small children who could declaim many pages with ease.

Certainly there is an element of mystery in this process of identifying incarnations. But suffice to say that, as a Buddhist, I do not believe that people like Mao or Lincoln or Churchill just 'happen'.

Another area of Tibetan experience that I would like very much to be scientifically investigated is the Tibetan medical system. Although it dates back more than two thousand years and is derived from a variety of sources, including ancient Persia, today its principles are wholly Buddhist. This gives it an entirely different complexion from western medicine. For example, it holds that the root causes of disease are Ignorance, Desire or Hatred.

According to Tibetan medicine, the body is dominated by three

main *nopa*, meaning literally 'harmers' but more often translated as 'humours'. These *nopa* are considered to be ever present within an organism. This means that it can never be entirely free from disease, or at least from its potential. But provided they are kept in a state of equilibrium, the body remains healthy. However, an imbalance brought about by one or more of the three root causes will manifest as illness, which is generally diagnosed by feeling a patient's pulse and checking his or her urine. Altogether, there are twelve principal places on the hands and wrists where the pulse is checked. The urine is similarly assessed in a variety of different ways (for colour, smell and so forth).

As regards treatment, the first line of approach concerns behaviour and diet. Medicine forms the second line; acupuncture and moxibustion (a specific heat treatment) the third; surgery the fourth. The medicines themselves are made from organic materials, sometimes combined with metal oxides and certain minerals (including, for example, crushed diamonds).

So far, there has been little clinical research into the value of the Tibetan medical system, although one of my former physicians, Dr Yeshe Dhonden, did participate in a series of laboratory experiments at the University of Virginia, USA. I understand that he had some surprisingly good results in curing white mice of cancer. But much more work needs to be done before any definite conclusions can be reached. In the meantime, I can only say that, in my personal experience, I have found Tibetan medicine to be very effective. I take it regularly, not just as a cure but also as a preventative against illness. I have found that it helps to strengthen the constitution, whilst its side effects are negligible. The result is that, despite my long days and intensive periods of meditation, I almost never experience feelings of tiredness.

Yet another area where I believe that there is scope for dialogue between modern science and Tibetan culture concerns theoretical rather than experiential knowledge. Some of the latest discoveries of particle physics seem to point towards the non-duality of mind and matter. For example, it has been found that if a vacuum (that is to say empty space) is compressed, particles appear where there

were none before, matter being apparently inherent in some way. These findings would appear to offer an area of convergence between science and the Buddhist *Madhyamika* theory of Emptiness. Essentially this states that mind and matter exist separately, but interdependently.

I am well aware, however, of the danger of tying spiritual belief to any scientific system. For whilst Buddhism continues to be relevant two and a half millennia after its inception, the absolutes of science tend to have a relatively short life. This is not to say that I consider things like the oracle and the ability of monks to survive nights spent out in freezing conditions to be evidence of magical powers. Yet I cannot agree with our Chinese brothers and sisters, who hold that Tibetan acceptance of these phenomena is evidence of our backwardness and barbarity. Even from the most rigorous scientific viewpoint, this is not an objective attitude.

At the same time, even if a principle is accepted, it does not mean that everything connected with it is valid. By way of analogy, it would be ludicrous to follow slavishly and without discrimination every utterance of Marx and Lenin in the face of clear evidence that Communism is an imperfect system. Great vigilance must be maintained at all times when dealing in areas about which we do not have great understanding. This, of course, is where science can help. After all, we consider things to be mysterious only when we do not understand them.

So far, the results of the enquiries I have described have been beneficial to all parties. But I realise that these are only ever as accurate as the experiments employed to achieve them. Furthermore, I am aware that not finding something does not mean that it does not exist. It only proves that the experiment was incapable of finding it. (If I have a non-metallic object in my pocket which is not picked up by a metal detector, it does not mean that my pocket is empty.) This is why we must be careful in our investigations, especially when dealing in an area where scientific experience is slight. It is also important to keep in mind the limitations imposed by nature itself. For example, whilst scientific enquiry cannot apprehend my thoughts, not only does this not

mean that they are non-existent, but also that some other method of investigation cannot discover something about them – which is where Tibetan experience comes in. Through mental training, we have developed techniques to do things which science cannot yet adequately explain. This, then, is the basis of the supposed 'magic and mystery' of Tibetan Buddhism.

The News from Tibet

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IN early 1959, as tension began to mount towards the final cataclysm, I heard of a PLA memorandum sent to Chairman Mao. It reported that the Tibetans were unhappy with the continued presence of the PLA, adding that there was so much disobedience that all the prisons were now full. Mao supposedly replied that there was no need to worry. The feelings of the Tibetans could be disregarded: they were irrelevant. As to the disobedience, the authorities must be prepared to put the whole population in prison if need be. Therefore, room would have to be made. I remember being horrified at hearing this. What a contrast from the old days when I could recognise every prisoner in Lhasa and considered each to be my friend.

Another story from around this time concerned Mao's reaction to a report sent him after the March uprising, saying that order had been restored. 'And what about the Dalai Lama?' he is said to have asked. When told that I had escaped, he replied, 'In that case we have lost the battle.' After that, all my information concerning the Great Helmsman came from reading newspapers and listening to the BBC World Service news broadcasts. I had no contact whatever with Peking; nor did the Tibetan Government in Exile, until after Mao's death in September 1976.

At that time I was in Ladakh, part of the remote northern Indian province of Jammu and Kashmir, where I was conducting a *Kalachakra* initiation. On the second of the ceremony's three days, Mao died. On the third day, it rained all morning. But, in the afternoon, there appeared one of the most beautiful rainbows I have ever seen. I was certain that it must be a good omen. However,

despite this auspicious sign, I did not expect the dramatic pace of change that followed in Peking. Almost immediately, the Gang of Four, led by Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, was arrested. It quickly became apparent that it was they who had effectively ruled China behind the ailing Chairman's back for the past several years, pursuing viciously radical policies and supporting a continuation of the Cultural Revolution.

Then, in 1977, Li Xiannian, at that time President of the People's Republic of China, was reported as saying that although it had achieved much, the Cultural Revolution had simultaneously caused some damage. This was the first sign that the Chinese leadership had at last begun to face reality. It was followed by a conciliatory statement about Tibet when, in April of that year, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme (by now a high ranking member of the administration in Peking), publicly announced that China would welcome the return of the Dalai Lama 'and his followers who fled to India'. Since the 1960s, the Chinese had been calling for all who had left Tibet to return, saying that they would be welcomed with open arms.

This statement marked the start of an intensive propaganda campaign to try to entice people back. We began to hear more and more about the 'unprecedented happiness in Tibet today'. Soon afterwards, Hua Guofeng, Mao's designated successor, called for the full restoration of Tibetan customs and, for the first time in twenty years, elderly people were permitted to circumambulate the Jokhang once more and national dress was allowed. This seemed very promising, and it proved not to be the last hopeful sign.

On 25 February 1978, to my great joy and surprise, the Panchen Lama was suddenly released after almost a decade in jail. And soon afterwards, Hu Yaobang, then in the ascendant, revised President Li Xiannian's pronouncement on the Cultural Revolution and stated that it had been an entirely negative experience, which had not benefited China in any way.

This sounded like a remarkable advance. But still, I felt that if the Chinese had really had a change of heart, this would best be

signalled by genuine openness as regards Tibet. In my 10 March speech (marking the nineteenth anniversary of the Tibetan people's national uprising), I therefore called on the Chinese authorities to allow unrestricted access to Tibet for foreigners. I also suggested that they should permit Tibetans in occupied Tibet to visit their families in exile, and vice versa. I felt that if the six million Tibetans really were happy and prosperous as never before, as was now being suggested, we had no reason to argue otherwise. But it was only right that we should have the opportunity to find out the truth of these statements.

To my surprise, it seemed that my suggestions were taken note of. For, not long after, the first foreign visitors were admitted to Tibet. And, in accordance with my wishes, provision was made for Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet to be able to make visits, although in neither case were these new permissions unrestricted.

The upheavals in China occurred at a time when India was going through important changes too. In 1977, Mrs Gandhi lost the election she called after a period of Emergency. She was followed in office by Mr Moraji Desai, whose Janata party succeeded in toppling the Congress party for the first time since Independence. It was not long before Mrs Gandhi regained power, but in the meantime I came to deepen my acquaintance with Mr Desai, whom I had first met in 1956 and already knew and liked.

At the time of writing, he is still alive, though now a very old man, and I continue to regard him as a close friend. He is a remarkable person with a wonderful face, full of life and free of worries. By this, I do not mean he is without his faults. But as with Mahatma Gandhi, his daily life is very austere. He is a strict vegetarian; he does not touch alcohol or tobacco. He is also utterly straightforward in his dealings with others. I sometimes wonder if he is not too straightforward. However, if this is one of his failings, in my eyes it is more than made up for by his friendship towards the Tibetan people. He once wrote to me saying that Indian culture and Tibetan culture are different branches of the same Bodhi Tree. This is quite true. As I have already made clear, the relationship between our countries goes very deep. Many

Indians consider Tibet to be a manifestation of Heaven on Earth – a land of gods and holy places. Both Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarova, in south and south-western Tibet respectively, are important places of pilgrimage to devout Indians. Similarly, we Tibetans consider India to be *Aryabhumi*, the Land of the Holy.

Towards the end of 1978, there was a further encouraging development when Deng Xiao-ping emerged as paramount authority in Peking. As leader of a more moderate faction, his ascendancy seemed to signal real hope for the future. I had always felt that Deng might one day do great things for his country. When I was in China during 1954–5, I met him a number of times and had been very impressed by him. We never had any long conversations but I heard much about him – particularly that he was a man of great ability and very decisive too.

The last time I saw him I remember him sitting, a very small man in a large armchair, slowly and methodically peeling an orange. He did not talk much, but it was clear that he was listening intently to all that was being said. He struck me as a powerful man. Now it began to look as if, in addition to these qualities, he was also quite wise. He came up with a number of impressive catch phrases, such as 'It is important to seek truth from facts', 'So long as it catches mice, it doesn't matter whether it's black or white' and 'If your face is ugly, there is no use trying to pretend otherwise.' Furthermore, as regards policy, he appeared more concerned with the economy and education than with political doctrine and the usual empty slogans.

Then, in November 1978, thirty-four prisoners, mostly elderly members of my own administration, were publicly released with great ceremony in Lhasa. These men were purportedly the last of the 'rebel leaders'. Chinese newspapers stated that, after being taken on a month-long tour of the 'New Tibet', they were to be assisted in finding jobs and even in going abroad if that was what they desired.

The arrival of the New Year brought no let-up in this spate of extraordinary developments. On 1 February 1979, coincidentally

the day that the People's Republic of China was formally recognised by the US, the Panchen Lama, in his first public appearance for fourteen years, added his voice to those calling for the Dalai Lama and his fellow exiles to return. 'If the Dalai Lama is genuinely interested in the happiness and welfare of the Tibetan masses, he need have no doubts about it,' he said. 'I can guarantee that the present standard of living of the Tibetan people in Tibet is many times better than that of the "old society".' A week later, this invitation was repeated by Radio Lhasa as it announced the formation of a special welcoming committee to receive Tibetans from abroad.

This was followed just a week later by the unexpected arrival of Gyalo Thondup in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) where I was attending a religious conference. To my surprise, he announced that he had heard through some old and trusted friends of his in Hong Kong (where he now lives) that *Xinhua*, the New China News Agency, which constitutes China's official legation to the British colony, wanted to make contact with him. Following this, he had met a personal emissary of Deng Xiao-ping, who explained that the Chinese leader wanted to open communications with the Dalai Lama. As a mark of his goodwill, Deng wanted to invite Gyalo Thondup to Peking for talks. My brother had refused as he wanted to seek my opinion first.

This was totally unexpected, and I did not reply immediately. The developments of the past two years all looked very promising. However, as the ancient Indian saying goes, 'When you have once been bitten by a snake, you become cautious even of rope.' And unfortunately, all my experience of the Chinese leadership suggested that it was untrustworthy. Not only did the authorities in question lie, but worse, when these lies were exposed they were not the least bit ashamed. The Cultural Revolution had been a 'tremendous success' whilst it was going on; now it was a failure – but there was no sense of humility in this admission. Nor was there anything to suggest that these people ever kept their promises. Despite the concrete undertaking of clause thirteen of the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement' that the Chinese would 'not

arbitrarily take a needle or thread' from the Tibetans, they had ransacked the whole country. On top of this, through countless atrocities, they had shown a total disrespect for human rights. It seemed that to the Chinese mind, perhaps because of the huge size of their own population, human life is considered to be a cheap commodity – and Tibetan lives to be of still less value. I therefore felt it necessary to exercise extreme caution.

On the other hand, my basic belief is that human problems can only be solved through human contact. So there could be no harm in hearing what the Chinese had to say. Hopefully we could simultaneously explain our own views. We certainly had nothing to hide. Also, if the authorities in Peking were in earnest, we might even be able to send some fact-finding missions to discover for ourselves the real situation.

With these considerations in mind, and knowing that our cause was 100 per cent just and in accordance with the wishes of the entire population of Tibet, I told my brother he was free to go. After he had seen the Chinese leaders, we would consider the next step. At the same time, I sent word to Peking via the Chinese Embassy in India, proposing that a fact-finding mission from Dharamsala should be permitted to visit Tibet with a view to discovering the real situation there and reporting back to me. I also suggested to my brother that he should see whether this might be feasible.

Soon afterwards, I received another exciting piece of news from an entirely different quarter. This came in the form of an invitation to visit the Buddhist communities of the Republic of Mongolia and of the USSR. I realised that to go might not please my friends in Peking, but, on the other hand, I felt that as a Buddhist monk and furthermore as the Dalai Lama, I had a responsibility to serve my co-religionists. Besides, how could I refuse the very people who gave me my title! And moreover, since I had not been able to fulfil my dream of visiting Russia when I was a high Chinese official (albeit one whose movements were severely restricted), I did not wish to miss the opportunity of going as a Tibetan refugee. I therefore accepted joyfully.

In the event, there were no negative repercussions and, when Gyalo Thondup returned to Dharamsala at the end of March, he announced that the Chinese had accepted my proposal to send a fact-finding mission to Tibet. This encouraged me enormously. It appeared that China was at last trying to find a peaceful solution to the Tibetan question. A date in August was set for the departure of the delegation.

Meanwhile, I left for Moscow en route to Mongolia in early June. On arrival I felt as if I was back in a familiar world. I recognised at once the same repressive atmosphere that I had come to know so well in China. But it did not put me off, for I could see that the people I met were essentially good and kind – and surprisingly naïve. This last observation was brought home to me when a journalist from one of the Russian daily newspapers came to interview me. All his questions were clearly designed to extract compliments. If I said anything that was not supportive of the Government or if my answers were not exactly what he was looking for, he gave me angry looks. On another occasion, a journalist, having come to the end of his prepared list of questions, became quite humble and said with total simplicity, ‘What do you think I should ask you now?’

Wherever I went in Moscow, I saw this same charm beneath surface conformity. It was further confirmation of my belief that nobody anywhere in the world consciously wants suffering. At the same time, I was reminded of the importance of contact with people on a personal level: I could see for myself that the Russians were not monsters any more than the Chinese or the British or the Americans are. I was particularly touched by the warmth of my reception by members of the Russian Orthodox Church.

From Moscow I journeyed to the Buryat Republic, where I spent a day at a Buddhist monastery. Although I was unable to communicate directly with anyone, I found I could understand their prayers as these were said in Tibetan, rather as Catholics all over the world use Latin. The monks also wrote in Tibetan. On top of this, I discovered that we could converse very well with our eyes. As I entered the monastery, I noticed that many of the monks

and lay people in the congregation were in tears. This was just the sort of spontaneous expression that Tibetans are prone to and I felt immediate kinship.

The monastery in Ulan Ude, the capital of Buryat, was one of the most remarkable things I saw in the USSR. It had been built in 1945, when Stalin was at the height of his power. I did not see how this could be, but it helped me to realise that spirituality is so deeply rooted in the human mind that it is very difficult, if not totally impossible, to eradicate. Like my own countrymen and women, the people of Buryat had suffered horribly for their faith, and for an even longer period of time. Yet everywhere I went, I found clear evidence that, given the slightest opportunity, their spiritual life flourished.

This deepened my conviction that it is vital for there to be dialogue between Buddhism and Marxism, where it survives, as indeed there must be between all religions and any form of materialist ideology. The two approaches to life are so obviously complementary. It is sad that people tend to think of them as being in opposition. If materialism and technology really are the answer to all of humanity's problems, the most advanced industrial societies would by now be full of smiling faces. But they are not. Equally, if people were meant only to be concerned with matters of spirituality, we would all be living joyously according to their religious beliefs. But then there would be no progress. Both material and spiritual development are required. And humanity must not stagnate, for that is a kind of death.

From Ulan Ude, I flew to Ulan Bator, the capital of the Republic of Mongolia, where I was met by a group of monks who gave me an emotional welcome. However, the joy and spontaneity with which I was greeted were evidently not approved of by the authorities. On that first day, people pressed in from all sides, trying to touch me. But next morning, I found everyone behaving as if they were statues and I noticed tears in their eyes. No one came near me when I visited the house where my predecessor had stayed at the beginning of this century. Later, though, one person did manage secretly to defy officialdom. As I left a museum, I felt

something very curious in the handshake of a man standing at the gate. On looking down, I realised that he was pressing a small rosary into my hand for blessing. Seeing this, I felt simultaneously great sorrow and compassion.

It was in this museum that I happened to notice a picture showing a monk with a huge mouth into which nomads were walking with their cattle. It was obviously intended as anti-religious propaganda. I moved over to take a closer look, but my guide nervously tried to steer me away from this embarrassing example of Communist propaganda. So I said there was no need to hide anything from me. There was a certain amount of truth in what the picture was saying. Such facts should not be shied away from. Every religion has the capacity to do harm, to exploit people as this image suggested. This is not the fault of the religion itself, but the fault of the people who practise it.

A further amusing incident concerned another exhibit which was a model of the *Kalachakra mandala*. I noticed that there were some inaccuracies in the way it was laid out, so when one young woman staff member began to explain its meaning to me, I said, 'Look! I'm the expert in these matters, why don't you let me explain it to you?' and began to point out the inaccuracies in the *mandala*. I found this quite satisfying.

As I got to know the Mongolians, I began to realise just how strong are the links between our two countries. For a start, the religion of Mongolia is the same as ours. As I have already mentioned, in the past, many Mongolian scholars visited Tibet, where they contributed a great deal to our culture and religion. Tibetans also use many religious texts which were written by Mongolians. Furthermore, we share many customs, for example the giving of *katas*. (One slight difference is that whereas Tibetan ones are white, Mongolian *katas* are pale blue or slate grey.) Thinking along these lines, it occurred to me that, historically speaking, Mongolia has a similar relationship with Tibet as Tibet has with India. With this in mind, I arranged for an exchange between students from our respective communities, thereby reviving an ancient link between our two countries.

When I came to leave, I had gained many favourable impressions of both the USSR and of Mongolia. Some of these concerned the material progress I had seen, particularly in the latter country where considerable advances had been made in the fields of industry, agriculture and animal husbandry. I have been back to Russia once since then (in 1987), when I was pleased to find that the atmosphere had changed dramatically for the better. This was tangible evidence that political liberty has a direct bearing on the way people feel about themselves. Now that they were able to express their true feelings, they clearly felt much happier.

On 2 August 1979, a delegation comprised of five members of the Tibetan Government in Exile left New Delhi en route to Tibet via Peking. I had chosen them carefully. Because it was important that they should be as objective as possible, I selected men who not only knew Tibet as it was before the Chinese invasion, but were familiar with the modern world as well. I also ensured that there was a representative of each of the three different provinces.

My brother Lobsang Samten was one of their number. He had long since renounced his monastic vows, leaving me as the only member of the family in the *Sangha*, and was at that time going through a very modern phase in terms of dress and appearance. He wore his hair long and had a thick, droopy moustache. His clothes were very casual too. I was a little worried that he might not be recognised by those in Tibet who should remember him.

More than ten years later, I still do not quite know what impression the leadership in Peking expected the delegation to have of the 'new' Tibet. But I think they were convinced that they would find such content and prosperity throughout their homeland that they would see no point in remaining in exile. (And in fact, fearing that the delegation might be physically attacked by a right-thinking local population, the Chinese authorities actually briefed Tibetans to show courtesy to the delegates!) I also suspect that the Dalai Lama and the existence of the Tibetan Government in Exile were a great embarrassment to China, which was becoming

anxious about world opinion. Therefore, any means to lure us back was acceptable.

It was fortunate they were so certain of themselves. For, whilst the first delegation was in Peking, the Chinese authorities accepted my proposal that this mission should be followed by three more.

My five representatives spent two weeks in Peking holding meetings and planning their route which, over a period of four months, was to take them across the length and breadth of Tibet. However, as soon as they arrived in Amdo, things started to go wrong for the Chinese. The delegates were mobbed by crowds of thousands of people wherever they went, especially by young people, all asking for blessings and for news about myself. This outraged the Chinese, who frantically signalled ahead to Lhasa to alert the authorities there of what might be in store for them. A reply came back saying, 'Thanks to the high standard of political training in the capital, there is no possibility of embarrassment.'

Yet, every step of the way, the welcome the five exiles received was ecstatic. And, on arrival in Lhasa, they were greeted by an immense crowd – the photographs brought back by them show the streets to be dense with thousands and thousands of well-wishers – who disobeyed an explicit warning to stay away. Whilst in the city, one of the delegates overheard a senior Chinese cadre turn to a colleague and say, 'The efforts of the last twenty years have been wasted in a single day.'

Although there is often a gap between the leadership and the people in countries where there is an authoritarian government, here it seemed that the Chinese had made an altogether extraordinary miscalculation. Even though they had a highly efficient intelligence system designed to prevent this sort of thing, their assessment was entirely wrong. But what I find still more surprising is that despite these experiences, the Chinese continue to persevere with the system. So, for example, when Hu Yaobang, then General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and Deng's heir apparent, visited Tibet the following year, he was taken to the Chinese equivalent of a Potemkin village and completely misled. Similarly, in 1988, I was told that when a prominent Chinese leader visited

Lhasa, he asked an old woman directly what she felt about the present situation in Tibet. She, of course, faithfully repeated the Party line and he duly took this to be the true feelings of a Tibetan. It is as if the Chinese authorities actually want to fool themselves. Yet surely anyone who was half sensible would realise that a person under threat of violent punishment would not reveal any negative thoughts?

Fortunately, Hu Yaobang was not entirely deceived. He publicly expressed shock at the living conditions of Tibetans and even asked whether all the money sent to Tibet had been thrown in the river. He went on to promise the withdrawal of eighty-five per cent of the Chinese cadres stationed in occupied Tibet.

Little more was heard about these proposed measures. Hu Yaobang's ascendancy did not last long and he was eventually forced to resign as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. Nevertheless, I am very grateful to his memory for the great courage he displayed in admitting China's mistakes in Tibet. The fact that he did so is clear evidence that not everyone, even amongst the leadership in China, supports the Government's repressive policies abroad. But if Hu Yaobang's admission did not have a lasting impact on Tibetan affairs, the report prepared by the first delegation, after its return to Dharamsala in late December, most certainly did.

When I arrived back from two long journeys of my own (to Russia, Mongolia, Greece, Switzerland and finally the United States) in October 1979, the five members of the delegation returned. With them they brought hundreds of rolls of film, many hours of recorded conversations and enough general information to occupy many months of collation, distillation and analysis. They also brought back more than seven thousand letters from Tibetans to their families in exile – the first time that mail had left Tibet for more than twenty years.

Unfortunately, their impressions of the 'new' Tibet had been strongly negative. At the same time as being mobbed by tearful Tibetans wherever they went, they saw abundant evidence of the way that the Chinese authorities had ruthlessly and systematically

tried to destroy our ancient culture. Moreover, they were regaled with numberless accounts of years of famine, mass starvation, public execution and gross and disgusting violations of human rights, the least of which included the abduction of children either into forced labour gangs or for 'education' in China, the imprisonment of innocent citizens, and the deaths of thousands of monks and nuns in concentration camps. It was a horrific litany, graphically illuminated by dozens of photographs of monasteries and nunneries reduced to piles of rubble, or turned into grain stores or factories or cattle pens.

However, in the face of this information, the Chinese authorities made it clear that they would not hear any criticism either from the delegates or any other Tibetan from the exile community. So long as we remained outside, we had no right to criticise what went on inside, they said. When Lobsang Samten told me this, I was reminded of an incident that took place during the 1950s. A Tibetan official was asked by a Chinese Party member what was his opinion of Chinese rule in Tibet. 'First let me leave the country,' the Tibetan replied, 'and then I will tell you.'

Yet it is true to say that the delegation did bring back some hopeful pieces of news. For example, when they were in Peking, they met a number of young students who were being educated as Communist Party cadres. But instead of them all being blindly Marxist and pro-Chinese policy, they turned out to be fully committed to the cause of Tibetan freedom. And, judging by the numerous instances when ordinary Tibetans openly defied Chinese authority to express their love and respect for the Dalai Lama, the spirit of the people was far from broken. In fact, it seemed that these desperate experiences had only served to strengthen their resolve.

Another positive event for the first delegation was its meeting, in Peking, with the Panchen Lama. He had been treated with great cruelty by the Chinese authorities and showed his five compatriots permanent marks on his body that had been inflicted during torture. He explained that after my flight into exile, his own monastery at Tashilhunpo had been left unharmed by the

PLA. But after he had begun to criticise our new masters, troops were sent in. Then, during 1962, he was told to take my place as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. He refused and instead sent to Chairman Mao a 70,000-character-long memorandum of complaints. Subsequently, he was stripped of office (although Mao shamelessly assured him that his observations would be heeded), and the handful of elderly caretaker monks that had found their way back to Tashilhunpo were arrested, accused of criminal activities and subjected to abuse in front of the people of Shigatse.

At the beginning of 1964, the Panchen Lama was given the opportunity of rehabilitation. He was invited to make a speech to the people of Lhasa during the *Monlam* festival, which was to be revived for a single day. He agreed to do so. However, to the amazement of the Chinese authorities, he announced to the assembled crowd that the Dalai Lama was indeed the true leader of the Tibetan people. He ended his speech with a rousing cry of 'Long live the Dalai Lama!' He was duly arrested and, after a secret trial lasting seventeen days, he disappeared from view. Many people feared that he too had been killed. But now it turned out that he had at first been put under house arrest before eventually being imprisoned in China's maximum security jail, where he was subjected to intensive torture and political 're-education'. Conditions there were so harsh that he attempted suicide more than once.

So, the Panchen Lama was alive and comparatively well. But the delegates saw that the health of Tibet itself was very poor. True, the country's economy had been transformed and there was more of everything. Yet this was of zero benefit to the Tibetans as all commodities were in the hands of the occupying Chinese. For example, there were now factories where there had been none before, but all that they produced went to China. And the factories themselves were sited with no regard for anything other than utility, with predictably detrimental results to the environment. The same was true of the hydro-electric power stations. Furthermore, the Chinese quarter of every town and city was flooded with light but, even in Lhasa, in the Tibetan district one bulb of

15 to 20 watts was the most that could be found in any room. These often failed, especially in winter when electric power resources were diverted to accommodate heavier use throughout the rest of the city.

As to agriculture, the Chinese had insisted that winter wheat be sown in place of the traditional barley crop. This was because the Chinese eat wheat rather than barley. Consequently, thanks to new intensive farming methods, one or two bumper crops were produced – followed by years of famine. The changes had caused the rapid erosion of Tibet's thin, fragile layer of fertile topsoil, leaving miles of desert.

Other land resources, such as forestry, had been similarly exploited. Since 1955, it was estimated that nearly fifty million trees had been felled and many millions of acres all but cleared of vegetation. Animal husbandry had improved dramatically: in some places there were ten times the number of animals feeding off the same amount of pasture as in former times. But in other places, over-exploitation meant the environment could no longer support any kind of grazing. As a result, whole ecologies have been lost. The once ubiquitous herds of deer, *kyang* and *drong* have now all but disappeared and the huge flocks of ducks and geese that were such a familiar sight are no longer to be seen.

Regarding health care, it now became clear that there were indeed a considerable number of hospitals, just as the Chinese had said. But these practised open discrimination on behalf of the immigrant population. And whenever a Chinese required blood in a transfusion, this would be taken from Tibetan 'volunteers'.

There were also far more schools than there had ever been. But again, the education programme had been perverted to benefit the Chinese. For example, the first delegation heard stories of how, in order to obtain funds from the central administration, the local Chinese authorities claimed that they were improving facilities for the Tibetans. The money was then used to benefit their own children. As to the education the Chinese provided for Tibetans, most of it was conducted in Chinese. It had been promised that the Tibetan language itself would be eradicated

'within fifteen years'. In reality, many of the schools were nothing more than labour camps for children. The only ones who really received proper schooling were the fifteen hundred or so most intellectually promising ones, who were forcibly sent to establishments in China, on the grounds that it would foster 'unity'.

The delegates also found that communications throughout Tibet had been transformed dramatically. There were roads criss-crossing it and linking almost every settlement. There were thousands of vehicles too, mainly heavy trucks – but all belonging to the Chinese Government. For ordinary Tibetans, however, movement was impossible without permission. Granted, the rules had recently been relaxed somewhat, but very few could afford to take advantage of this.

Similarly, although consumer goods were certainly available, none but a tiny handful of Tibetans could afford them. The great majority lived in a state of abject and pitiful poverty. The delegates heard how until only recently food rationing had been so tight that the quota for thirty days could only be eked out for twenty. After that, people were reduced to eating leaves or grass. A month's butter ration, for example, which would in former times have been used in a single serving of tea, could only be used to smear the lips. And, everywhere they went, the delegates found the local people stunted in growth from malnutrition and dressed literally in rags. Gone, needless to say, were the gay ornaments and pieces of jewellery – earrings and so forth – which even the least exalted Tibetan would have had in former times.

On top of this extraordinary hardship, people were taxed unbelievably, though of course the charges were not called taxes: it was 'rent', or whatever. Even nomads were forced to pay for the privileges of their precarious livelihood. All in all, China's economic programme for Tibet was itself a form of torture.

As if this were not enough, with regard to Tibetan culture the delegates found that it had been brutally suppressed. For example, the only songs allowed were political paeans sung to Chinese tunes. Religion was banned. Thousands of monasteries and nunneries had been desecrated. They heard how this had been systematically

carried out from the late 1950s onwards. Each building was visited first by clerks who documented the contents. They were followed by teams of workers who loaded everything of immediate value on to trucks which went straight back to China, where the booty was either melted down for bullion or sold on the international art market in exchange for hard currency. Next, more workers would be sent in to remove any other materials that could be useful, including the roof tiles and timber. Finally, members of the local population would be forced to 'show their contempt' for the old society and the 'corrupt' monks. Within a matter of weeks, there would be nothing left but piles of rubble.

The contents of these monasteries represented the real disposable wealth of Tibet. For hundreds of years, they had amassed the donations of succeeding generations of families who always gave the best they could afford. Now, all this had vanished into the insatiable stomach of the Chinese nation.

Still not content with this, the Chinese authorities had also determined to control the Tibetan population. A limit of two children per couple had been imposed in Tibet (and not just in China itself, as was claimed). Those who exceeded this quota were sent to medical facilities like the one known simply as 'the butchery' in Gyantse, where pregnant women had their foetuses forcibly aborted prior to sterilisation. Indeed, many women were involuntarily forced into using birth control, as we now know from recent arrivals from Tibet who were discovered to have been fitted with crude copper intra-uterine devices.

And when the people rose in revolt, which they did on several different occasions after 1959, whole villages were razed, their inhabitants murdered, whilst tens of thousands of the remaining population were put into prison. There they were kept under the most vile conditions, with forced labour by day, *thamzing* sessions until late at night, and only starvation rations to nourish them. I myself have since spoken to a number of people who were prisoners of the Chinese. One of them was Dr Tenzin Choedrak, who had been appointed my junior personal physician in the late 1950s. When the first fact-finding mission went to Peking, I requested

that they ask the authorities there that he be released and allowed to join me in exile.

Nothing came of this at first, but a year later he was finally freed and, at the end of 1980, he came to Dharamsala. The stories of cruelty and degradation he brought with him were almost unbelievable. Many times over the twenty years of his incarceration he had been close to death from starvation. He told me of how he and his fellow prisoners were forced to consume their own clothing for food and how one inmate, with whom he was in hospital at one time, was so desperate that when he passed a worm in his meagre stool, he washed it and ate it.

I do not repeat any of this information gratuitously. I write as a Buddhist monk not to antagonise my Chinese brothers and sisters but because I want to educate people. There are undoubtedly many good Chinese people who are unaware of the true situation in Tibet. Nor do I relate such grim facts out of bitterness. On the contrary, these things have happened, so there is nothing to be done except look to the future.

Since the return of the first fact-finding delegation, more than ten years ago now, its findings have been confirmed from numerous other sources, including further Tibetan delegations and foreign journalists and tourists, as well as a few sympathetic Chinese. Unfortunately, in the interval, although there has been some further material progress, the picture has in many ways worsened.

We now know that more than 300,000 Chinese troops are stationed in Tibet, many of them along the still-disputed border with India, but also at least 50,000 based within a day's journey from Lhasa. On top of this, China maintains at least one-third of its nuclear weaponry on Tibetan soil. And because Tibet contains one of the world's richest deposits of uranium, the Chinese are likely to render large areas of the country hazardous from radioactive waste through their mining activities. In Amdo, the north-eastern province where I was born, there exists the largest gulag known to man – big enough, by some estimates, to cater for the internment of up to ten million prisoners.

And following a massive immigration programme, the population of Chinese in Tibet now comfortably exceeds that of Tibetans. My countrymen and women are today in grave danger of becoming nothing more than a tourist attraction in their own country.

Initiatives for Peace

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THE SECOND and third fact-finding missions both left India for Tibet during May 1980. One was comprised of younger people, the other of educators. In the first instance, I wanted to try to gain an impression of how the situation in Tibet appeared to people whose perspective had the freshness of youth. In the second, I wanted to know what were the prospects for the youth of Tibet itself.

Unfortunately, the young people's mission was unable to complete its investigations. When Tibetans began turning out in force to greet the exiles and to denounce the Chinese presence, the authorities accused the delegates of inciting the masses to acts of defiance and expelled the delegation from Tibet for endangering the 'unity of the Motherland'. Naturally, I was disturbed by this turn of events. Far from 'seeking truth from facts', it seemed that the Chinese were determined to ignore facts altogether. But, at least this expulsion showed that they were taking some notice of the feelings of Tibetans.

The third delegation, which was led by my sister Jetsun Pema, was permitted to stay, however. Returning to Dharamsala in October 1980, its findings made clear that although there had been a slight improvement in the general standard of education over the past twenty years, this was not much of a blessing, for it seemed that, to the Chinese, the real value of reading was to enable children to study the thoughts of Chairman Mao and of writing to enable them to produce 'confessions'.

Overall, the information gathered by the fact-finding missions revealed not only the full extent of China's rape of Tibet, but also

that living conditions for Tibetans continued to be wretched. And although, compared with the suffering of the previous twenty years, the situation had undoubtedly improved, it was evident that the Chinese authorities still considered Tibetans to be 'backward, ignorant, cruel and barbaric', as they put it.

In 1981, my mother died after a short period of illness following a stroke. All her long life (she was as old as the century) she had enjoyed good health, so to be bedridden was a new experience for her. It meant that for the first time she was dependent on others. Previously, my mother had always taken care of herself. For example, although she liked to get up very early, she never imposed this on her servants, always fetching her own tea in the morning, despite an injured wrist which made it difficult for her to manage.

During the last months of her life, Tenzin Choegyal, who at that time lived with her, asked her quite candidly which one of her children was her favourite. I think he was hoping that he would receive the citation. But no, she replied that it was Lobsang Samten. I tell this story not just because, when my younger brother related it to me, I too thought for a moment that I might be a candidate, but also because, as it turned out, Lobsang Samten was the only one of her children present at her passing. I myself saw her shortly beforehand, when I walked down to her cottage, but at the actual time I was away at Bodh Gaya.

As soon as I heard the news, I began to say prayers asking that she should have a good rebirth. I was joined in this by every Tibetan present; it was very touching to see the depth of feeling shown by all these other people. Naturally, the Government sent a letter of condolence too. This was addressed to Ling Rinpoché, who was supposed to break the news. But for some reason it was delivered directly to me. An amusing incident followed. Having read the letter, I passed it on to him. When he in turn had read it, he came up to me puzzled and, scratching his head, said: 'I see that I was supposed to convey this letter to you, not the other way round. Now what am I to do?' It was the only time I ever saw Ling Rinpoché lost for words.

Of course, I was very sad at my mother's death. I had seen less and less of her as the years went by and the pressure of my work and duties increased. Yet we remained spiritually close, so I experienced a great sense of loss – just as I always do when any old member of my entourage dies. Of course, with time, the older generation is gradually passing away, as it must. More and more I am surrounded by people who are younger than me. In fact, the average age of my administration is under thirty-five. This, I feel, is good in many ways. The challenges presented by the situation in Tibet today require modern minds. Also, it is hard for people who grew up in the old Tibet to comprehend what is happening there. It is better that those who address these problems should not have to bear the burden of memory. Besides, it is for our children that the struggle to regain Tibet's rightful independence is being waged and it is they who must carry on that fight, if they still want to.

At the beginning of April 1982, a three-member team of negotiators from Dharamsala flew to Peking for discussions on the future of Tibet. It was led by Juchen Thubten Namgyal, then senior member of the *Kashag*. With him were Phuntsog Tashi Takla, my former *Kusun Depon*, who was one of the interpreters for Ngabo Ngawang Jigme in 1951, and Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, Chairman of the *Chetui Lhenkhang*, the Tibetan People's Assembly. Whilst there, they met senior members of the Chinese Government with a view to both sides clarifying their position.

Among the points put forward for discussion by the Tibetans were, firstly, the historical facts concerning our homeland. They reminded the Chinese that, historically speaking, Tibet has always been separate from China, a fact that was implicitly recognised when Peking imposed the Seventeen-Point 'Agreement'. Secondly, the negotiators put it to the Chinese that, despite the 'progress' in Tibet, loudly publicised with outrageous exaggeration, in reality the Tibetan people were totally dissatisfied. On the basis of these facts, they suggested, it was up to China to find a new approach which acknowledged reality.

One of the negotiators also asked whether Tibetans, in view of

their different race, should not have the same rights, if not more, than the Chinese Government had said it was prepared to grant its own people in Taiwan. He was told that these offers were being made to Taiwan because it had not yet been 'liberated'. 'But Tibet is already on the glorious road to Socialism.'

Unfortunately it turned out that, for their part, the Chinese did not have anything of substance to say. They lectured the delegates and accused us of using the evidence of the fact-finding missions to distort the truth. All that they really wanted to discuss was the return of the Dalai Lama. To this end, they produced the following list of five points regarding my future status:

- 1 The Dalai Lama should be confident that China has entered a new stage of long-term political stability, steady economic growth and mutual help among all nationalities.
- 2 The Dalai Lama and his representatives should be frank and sincere with the Central Government, not beat about the bush. There should be no more quibbling over the events of 1959.
- 3 The central authorities would sincerely welcome back the Dalai Lama and his followers. This is based on the hope that they will contribute to upholding China's unity, to promoting solidarity between the Han and Tibetan nationalities and among all nationalities, and to promoting the modernisation programme.
- 4 The Dalai Lama will enjoy the same political status and living conditions as he had before 1959. It is suggested that he need not go to live in Tibet or hold local posts there. Of course, he may go back to Tibet from time to time. His followers need not worry about their jobs and living conditions. These will only be better than before.
- 5 When the Dalai Lama wishes to come back, he can issue a brief statement to the press. It is up to him to decide what he would like to say in the statement.

Then after the delegates had returned to Dharamsala, the Chinese Government published a heavily slanted version of the proceedings, which referred to our viewpoint as being 'splittist', 'reactionary' and 'opposed by the Chinese people and most strenuously by the Tibetans'. It began to look as if China's 'new' policy regarding Tibet was much less than the developments of the late 1970s had suggested. As an old Tibetan saying goes, 'Before your eyes they show you brown sugar, but in your mouth they put sealing wax.'

As regards the five points concerning myself, I do not know quite why the Chinese thought that my personal status was of much importance to me. Throughout our struggle I have not been concerned for myself but for the rights, welfare and freedom of my six million fellow countrymen and women. My reason for this is not simply a concern with borders and so forth. It is because I believe that the most important thing for humankind is its own creativity. I further believe that, in order to be able to exercise this creativity, people need to be free. I have freedom in exile. And, as a refugee for over thirty-one years, I have learned something of its value. Therefore, it would be wrong for me to return to Tibet before all Tibetans enjoy similar liberty in their own country.

Nevertheless, despite the unproductive nature of these discussions with the Chinese administration, I decided I would make a short trip to Tibet, if that were acceptable to Peking. I wanted to talk with my people and find out for myself what the situation really was. The response was favourable, and preparations were put in hand for an advance party to go over in 1984 prior to my own visit the following year.

In the meantime, owing to the lifting of travel restrictions, a considerable number of Tibetans began to arrive in India. They continue to do so, though less and less. At the time of writing, about 10,000 have made the journey and more than half, mostly young people who want to take advantage of the education offered by our schools and monastic universities, have remained. Of those who returned, most did so for compelling reasons.

I try to greet all these visitors and new arrivals from Tibet in person. Invariably, our meetings are very emotional: most are such sad, innocent people, ragged and destitute. I always ask them about their own lives and families. And always there are tears when they reply – some breaking down entirely as they relate their pitiful stories.

Also during this period I began to meet growing numbers of tourists who had been to Tibet. For the first time in history, foreigners (mostly western) were being given limited access to the Land of Snows. Unfortunately, the Chinese authorities imposed severe restrictions from the start. Except during the initial period of the open-door policy, entry was virtually impossible unless as a member of a group with a planned itinerary. And once inside, the number of places open to visitors was strictly limited. Furthermore, contact with Tibetans was minimal, since the great majority of accommodation available was Chinese-owned and run. The few Tibetans working in these establishments were in menial jobs as servants and cleaners.

All of this was – and continues to be – a drawback. Worse, the Chinese tour guides inevitably only show people those monasteries and buildings which have been or are being rebuilt. They do not see the thousands still in ruins. It is true, especially in and around Lhāsa, that much restoration work has been under way for the past ten years or so. But it is not cynicism which prompts me to say that this is largely for the benefit of the tour groups. Since the monks allowed into these revived buildings are, we know, carefully screened by the authorities, and since, rather than study, they must carry out the restoration work themselves (with money provided mainly by private individuals), it is the only possible conclusion.

Thanks to the carefully trained guides, few tourists ever realise this. And if they ask why so much restoration work is necessary, they are told that, regrettably, the excesses of the Cultural Revolution reached even into Tibet but that the Chinese people, who are truly sorry for what happened under the rule of the Gang of Four, are taking all steps necessary to put right those terrible

wrongs. It is never said that the majority of the destruction was carried out long before the Cultural Revolution.

Sadly, to many visitors, Tibet is probably little more than an exotic destination, another stamp in the passport. They see enough monasteries to satisfy their curiosity, and enough colourfully dressed pilgrims visiting them to allay any suspicions they may have. However, if this is true of most, it is not true of all. And this is where the real benefit of tourism in Tibet lies. It has nothing to do with economics or statistics, but rather with the small percentage of visitors who have real imagination and curiosity. They are the ones who take the opportunity to slip away from their chaperones and look where they are not supposed to look and, more importantly, hear information that they are not supposed to hear.

Between 1981 and 1987, the number of visitors to Tibet rose from 1,500 to 43,000 per year. From those who subsequently contacted us in exile, we learned that there was little substance to China's supposed 'liberalism'. Tibetans were still denied free speech. And although in private people made clear their opposition to China's occupation of our country, they dared not do so in public. Furthermore, their access to information was strictly controlled, as was the practice of religion. It took little objectivity to see that Tibet was a police state where people were terrorised into submission. Thus they continued to live in fear, despite the promises of genuine reform in the immediate aftermath of Mao's death. And now they had to contend with the increasing influx of Chinese immigrants who threatened to swamp them.

Many of the visitors that I met subsequently said they had basically been pro-China before they went, only to have their ideas overturned by what they saw. Similarly, a lot said that, although they were basically uninterested in politics, they now felt compelled to change their stance. I remember in particular a Norwegian man who told me that initially he had admired the Chinese for their destruction of religion. But now that he had been back to Lhasa for a second time, he had seen what was really happening. Was there anything, he asked, that he could do to help

my people? I replied to him, as I reply to all those who have been to Tibet and ask this question, that the best thing he could do was tell the truth of what he had seen to as many people as possible. That way, the world's knowledge of Tibet's plight is gradually increased.

Following what I learned both from the new arrivals and those tourists I met, I was not greatly surprised to hear, in September 1983, of a new bout of repression in China and Tibet. Executions were reported in Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse, with further arrests in Chamdo and Karze. Ostensibly, the crack-down (which covered China as well) was aimed at 'criminal and anti-social elements' but this clearly meant dissidents. However, although this seemed to indicate a hardening in the attitude of the Chinese authorities, there was a positive aspect to the news. For the first time, information about China's activities in Tibet was disseminated by the international press, which had recently been permitted to send correspondents to Tibet.

Feeling that this new terror must signal a return to the old, harsh methods of the Mao era, the refugee population reacted strongly. Mass demonstrations of protest were held in Delhi and throughout the settlements in India. For my own part, I felt it was too soon to tell whether this brutality merely represented a backlash by conservatives against Deng Xiao-ping's regime, or whether Tibet was re-entering a period of darkness. But it was evident that the advance party to my visit could not now take place. Subsequently my own did not materialise.

By May 1984, it had become clear that China's policy with regard to Tibet had indeed undergone a major shift. In direct contradiction to Hu Yaobang's pledge to reduce by eighty-five per cent the number of Chinese officials in Tibet, a massive effort to encourage immigration began. In the name of 'development', 60,000 skilled and unskilled workers were recruited to start the process and given financial guarantees, housing assistance and the promise of home-leave entitlements. Simultaneously, due to the relaxation of travel restrictions within China itself, many others followed as private individuals, lured by the prospect of finding

work. Thus, in accordance with the Tibetan saying that where there is one Chinese, ten will follow, a huge influx ensued – and continues unabated.

In late autumn that same year, Mrs Gandhi was assassinated and the Tibetan refugees lost a true friend. I was very shocked when I heard the news, en route to Delhi from London – not least because I was due to have lunch with her and J. Krishnamurti that very day. She was succeeded in office by her son Rajiv, who, as a young leader, had great determination to do something for his country and whatever he could for the Tibetan exile community.

Rajiv Gandhi is a man with a friendly, gentle nature and a very good heart. I well remember the first time I saw him. During my 1956 visit to India, I was invited to lunch at the residence of his grandfather, Pandit Nehru. When the Prime Minister showed me into the garden, I noticed two small boys playing around a tent with a large firework that they were trying unsuccessfully to launch into space. This was Rajiv and his elder brother Sanjay. Recently, Rajiv reminded me that I had tied them both inside the tent, much to their amusement.

Less than a year later, Tibet lost one of its very greatest supporters when Lobsang Samten died. He was only fifty-four. In a way, despite my profound sorrow, I was not much surprised by this. His experiences as a member of the first fact-finding mission had affected him profoundly. He could make no sense of Chinese indifference to Tibet in the face of such obvious suffering and unhappiness. And whereas previously he had always been full of jokes and fun (he had a highly developed and very vulgar sense of humour), subsequently he fell into long periods of depression. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that he died of a broken heart.

I deeply regretted Lobsang Samten's death, not only because we were so close, but also because I was unable to be with him during his fatal illness. The last time I saw him was on a visit to Delhi, where he was attending to some business connected with

his work as director of the Tibetan Medical Institute. Rather than return to Dharamsala by bus with his wife, he had decided to remain an extra day to carry on with his work. He would then travel back with me. But on arrival at the train station, he had a change of heart. His business was not quite finished so, despite the opportunity of a lift home, he felt that really he ought to stay. This was typical of him. He never put himself first. A day later he went down with 'flu for no apparent reason. This progressed to pneumonia complicated by jaundice and he was dead within three weeks.

Whenever I think about Lobsang Samten today, I am struck by his humility. He always paid me the same respect as an ordinary Tibetan, and did not really treat me as a brother. For example, whenever I arrived home or left to travel somewhere, he invariably lined up with the people at the gate to my residence to greet me or wish me a safe journey. And not only was he humble, but he was also very compassionate. I recall once mentioning to him something about the leper colony at Orissa in eastern India. Like me, he was deeply impressed with any kind of work dedicated to relieving the suffering of others. So when I told him that I was wondering whether the Tibetan community in exile could do anything to help them, he burst into tears and said that he personally was ready to do anything he could.

Following my visits to America in 1979, 1981 and 1984, many people in that country had expressed a desire to do something for Tibet. As a direct result of this, in July 1985, ninety-one members of the US Congress signed a letter to the then President of the People's Assembly in Peking, Li Xiannian, expressing support for direct talks between the Chinese Government and my representatives. The letter urged the Chinese to 'grant the very reasonable and justified aspirations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his people every consideration'.

For the first time, Tibet had formal political support – something I took as an encouraging sign that the justice of our cause was finally beginning to be recognised internationally. Further

evidence of this was a surge of interest among people in other countries, who started to take similar steps.

Then, in early 1987, I received an invitation to address the Human Rights Caucus of the US Congress in Washington DC. I accepted gladly. A date was fixed for a visit during the autumn. In the meantime, a number of my old friends suggested that I should use this opportunity to put forward some definite goals for the Tibetan cause with which supporters of justice round the world could identify. This struck me as good advice and I began to formalise some of the ideas that I had had in mind over the past few years.

Just before I was due to leave for America, Congress published a new report on human rights violations in Tibet. In this, it was noted that its 1985 letter to President Li Xiannian had been ignored: 'there has been no evidence of any consideration [of the Dalai Lama's very reasonable and justified aspirations] being granted by the People's Republic of China'.

After arriving in America, I delivered my address on Capitol Hill on 21 September 1987. The proposals that I outlined have since become known as the Five-Point Peace Plan. It is comprised of the following points:

- 1 The transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace.
- 2 Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.
- 3 Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.
- 4 Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
- 5 Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

After briefly putting forward these suggestions, I invited questions from the audience. As I did so, I noticed a number of people who looked as though they might be Chinese. I asked them whether they were. There was a moment's hesitation before they replied that, yes, they were from *Xinhua*, the New China News Agency. Since then, I have noticed that Peking now invariably sends monitors whenever I speak in public abroad. Often, these men and women show personal friendliness towards me and only occasionally have they been negative and sarcastic, their faces distorted with guilt.

I would like to explain in general terms the Five-Point Peace Plan. Its first component, my proposal that the whole of Tibet, including the eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, be transformed into a zone of *Abimsa* (a Hindi term meaning a state of peace and non-violence) is in keeping with Tibet's position as a peaceful Buddhist nation. It is also in keeping with Nepal's similar move to proclaim itself a peace zone, something that has already drawn China's support. If implemented, it would allow Tibet to resume its historical role of acting as a neutral buffer state separating the continent's great powers.

The following are key elements of the proposed Zone of *Abimsa*:

- The entire Tibetan plateau would be demilitarised.
- The manufacture, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments on the Tibetan plateau would be prohibited.
- The Tibetan plateau would be transformed into the world's largest natural park or biosphere. Strict laws would be enforced to protect wildlife and plant life; the exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated so as not to damage relevant ecosystems; and a policy of sustainable development would be adopted in populated areas.

- The manufacture and use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste would be prohibited.
- National resources and policy would be directed towards the active promotion of peace and environmental protection. Organisations dedicated to the furtherance of peace and to the protection of all forms of life would find a hospitable home in Tibet.
- The establishment of international and regional organisations for the promotion and protection of human rights would be encouraged in Tibet.

When established, the Zone of *Ahimsa* would enable India to withdraw her troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet. This would be achieved under an international agreement which would satisfy China's legitimate security needs and build trust among the Tibetan, Chinese, Indian and other peoples of the region. This is in everyone's best interest, particularly that of China and India, as it would enhance their security, at the same time reducing the economic burden of maintaining high troop concentrations on the disputed Himalayan border. Historically, relations between China and India were never strained. It was only when Chinese armies marched into Tibet, creating for the first time a common border, that tensions arose between these two powers, ultimately leading to the 1962 war. Since then, numerous dangerous incidents have continued to occur.

A restoration of good relations between the world's two most populous countries would be greatly facilitated if they were separated – as they have been throughout history – by a large and friendly intermediary region.

To improve relations between the Tibetan people and the Chinese, the first requirement is the creation of trust. After the holocaust of the last three decades, during which, incredibly, almost one and a quarter million Tibetans lost their lives from starvation, execution, torture and suicide, and tens of thousands

lingered in prison camps, only a withdrawal of Chinese troops could start a genuine process of reconciliation. The vast occupation force in Tibet is a daily reminder to Tibetans of the oppression and suffering they have experienced. A troop withdrawal would be an essential signal that in future a meaningful relationship might be established with the Chinese, based on friendship and trust.

Unfortunately, Peking read this first part of my proposal as a move towards separation, though it is not so to my mind. All that I meant by it is the logical conclusion that if there is to be genuine harmony between our two peoples, then one side or the other must make a concession or at least some conciliatory gesture. And since Tibet is the aggrieved party, because we Tibetans have lost everything, we have nothing to offer the Chinese. Therefore, it is reasonable that, in order to bring about an atmosphere of mutual trust, those people who carry rifles (whether these rifles be hidden or not) should be withdrawn. That is what I mean by a zone of peace: simply an area where no one carries weapons. Not only will this help to create trust between the two sides, but it will also give the Chinese an important economic boost. Their expenditure on maintaining large standing armies in Tibet is an enormous drain on their resources as a developing country.

The second component of my Five-Point Peace Plan concerns what amounts to the greatest threat to the continuation of Tibetans as a distinct race, namely the population transfer of Chinese into Tibet. By the mid-1980s, it had become clear that the Government in Peking is pursuing a deliberate policy of Sinocisation: what some people have called a 'final solution' by stealth. They are doing this by reducing the native Tibetan population to an insignificant and disenfranchised minority in its own homeland. This must be stopped. Such a massive transfer of Chinese civilians into Tibet is in direct contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention. As a result of it, in the eastern parts of our country the Chinese now greatly outnumber Tibetans. For example, in Qinghai Province which today comprises Amdo, where I was born, there are, according to Chinese statistics, 2.5 million Chinese and only

750,000 Tibetans. Even in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (that is to say, central and western Tibet), the Chinese already outnumber Tibetans, according to our information.

This population transfer policy is not new. China has systematically applied it to other areas. Not long ago, the Manchus were a distinct race with their own culture and traditions. Today, only two to three million Manchurians are left in Manchuria, where 75 million Chinese have settled. In Eastern Turkestan, which the Chinese now call Xinjiang, the Chinese population has grown from 200,000 in 1949 to over seven million today: more than half the total population. In the wake of the Chinese colonisation of Inner Mongolia, the Chinese number 8.5 million, Mongolians only 2.5 million. At present, in the whole of Tibet, we estimate that there are already 7.5 million Chinese, outnumbering the Tibetan population of around six million.

For the Tibetans to survive as a people, it is imperative that population transfer is stopped and that Chinese settlers be allowed to return to China. Otherwise, Tibetans will soon be no more than a tourist attraction and relic of a noble past. At present it seems that it is mainly economic incentive which keeps them there; they certainly find the conditions difficult: altitude sickness is reported to be endemic amongst the Chinese population.

The third component of my proposal concerns human rights in Tibet. These must be respected. The Tibetan people must once again be free to develop culturally, intellectually, economically and spiritually and to be able to exercise basic democratic freedoms. Human rights violations in Tibet are amongst the most serious in the world. This is attested to by Amnesty International and other such organisations. Discrimination is practised in Tibet under a policy of outright apartheid which the Chinese call 'segregation and assimilation'. In reality Tibetans are, at best, second-class citizens in their own country. Deprived of all basic democratic rights and freedoms, they exist under a colonial administration of occupation in which all real power is wielded by Chinese officials of the Communist Party and the PLA. Although the Chinese Government allows Tibetans to rebuild some Buddhist monaster-

ies and to worship in them, it forbids all serious study and teaching of religion. Thus, while Tibetans in exile have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights under the draft constitution promulgated by myself in 1963, thousands and thousands of my countrymen continue to suffer in prisons and labour camps for their belief in freedom. For in Tibet a Tibetan who shows loyalty to China is called 'progressive', but anyone who shows loyalty to his or her own country is branded a 'criminal' and incarcerated.

My fourth proposal calls for serious efforts to be made to restore the natural environment of Tibet. Tibet should not be used for the production of nuclear weapons and the dumping of nuclear waste. Tibetans have a great respect for all forms of life. This inherent feeling is enhanced by our Buddhist faith which prohibits the harming of all sentient beings, whether human or animal. Prior to the Chinese invasion, Tibet was a fresh, beautiful, unspoiled wilderness sanctuary in a unique natural environment.

Sadly, during the past few decades, the wildlife of Tibet has been almost totally destroyed and, in many places, irreparable damage has been done to its forests. The overall effect on Tibet's delicate environment has been devastating – particularly since the country's altitude and aridity mean that the process of restoring vegetation will take much longer than in lower, wetter regions. For this reason, what little is left must be protected and efforts made to reverse the effects of China's iniquitous and wanton destruction of the Tibetan environment.

In doing so, the first priority will be to halt the production of nuclear weaponry and, even more importantly, to prevent the dumping of nuclear waste. Apparently, China plans not only to dispose of its own but also to import other countries' waste, in exchange for hard currency. The danger this represents is obvious. Not only living generations, but future generations are threatened. Furthermore, the inevitable problems this would cause locally could so easily turn into a catastrophe of global proportions. Giving waste to China, which might have access to large areas of lightly populated land but has only crude technology, will likely prove only a short-term solution to the problem.

In my call for negotiations on the future status of Tibet, I expressed my wish to approach the subject in a spirit of frankness and conciliation, with a view to finding a solution that is in the long-term interest of everyone – the Tibetans, the Chinese and ultimately all people on earth – my motivation in all this being the possibility of contributing to world peace through regional peace. I said nothing merely to criticise the Chinese. On the contrary, I want to help the Chinese in any way that I can. I hoped that my suggestions would be useful to them. Unfortunately, they chose only to see them as a call for separatism (although, with regard to the future of Tibet, I nowhere spoke of sovereignty) and Peking moved swiftly to denounce my speech in strong terms.

This did not much surprise me. Nor was I greatly surprised at the reaction of the people of Tibet – though I did not expect it. A few days after I had spoken in Washington, there came reports of huge demonstrations in Lhasa.

Universal Responsibility and the Good Heart

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I LATER DISCOVERED that the demonstrations of September and October 1987 followed directly Peking's denunciation of my Five-Point Peace Plan. Lhasans in their thousands turned out to call for a restoration of Tibetan independence. Predictably, the Chinese authorities reacted with violence and cruelty. Armed police moved in to break up the demonstrations, opening fire indiscriminately and killing at least nineteen people. Many more were wounded.

At first the Chinese denied that any shots had been fired. Six months later they admitted that some members of the security forces had fired warning shots into the air above the heads of the crowd. But, they suggested, some of these rounds must have struck the crowd, instead of falling harmlessly. (When I heard this, I wondered whether perhaps they were referring to some new secret weapon: a Tibetan blood-seeking bullet.)

News of the demonstrations and the merciless and bloody crackdown flashed around the world and, for the first time since 1959, Tibet was headline news. However, it was not until some time afterwards that I heard the full details of what happened. And for this I was indebted to the handful of western tourists who happened to be in the capital at that time.

Forty of them subsequently formed a group and submitted a report on the atrocities they had seen. From this I learned that the pattern of both demonstrations was the same. Initially, a handful of monks had gathered in front of the Jokhang, shouting,

'*Bö rangzen*': 'Independence for Tibet'. They were quickly joined by hundreds, then thousands, of lay people who echoed these calls for freedom. Suddenly a battalion of security men appeared. Without warning, about sixty monks and lay people were arrested and hustled into the police station, which today lies immediately opposite the Jokhang. Before being taken inside, they were viciously beaten. Meanwhile, people pleaded with officials for the release of the demonstrators. But suddenly dozens of security men arrived with video cameras and began filming the crowd. Fearing subsequent identification, several people began throwing stones at the police as they filmed. A few Tibetans panicked and began overturning police vehicles and setting them alight, whereupon armed members of the security forces started shooting. Most people showed great restraint, however, and when some of the police ran away, dropping their guns, they gathered up the weapons and broke them on the ground.

During the disturbances of 1 October 1987, the police station itself was, regrettably, set on fire by the demonstrators, who, in a desperate attempt to release their companions, tried to burn down the door. Until then, members of the security forces had repeatedly come running out of the building to drag people inside, where they were horribly beaten.

When eventually the crowd dispersed, at least a dozen Tibetans, including several children, lay dead. That night and on subsequent nights, hundreds were seized from their homes. In the end, more than two thousand were imprisoned. Of these, most were subjected to beatings and torture, and one report spoke of forty executions.

Before going further, I wish to express my deep appreciation to those foreigners who, despite their having no obligation to do so, selflessly risked their lives to help their suffering fellow human beings. Such spontaneous expressions of humanity represent the only hope for the future of mankind. Some of these men and women repeatedly risked their lives trying to help the many seriously wounded Tibetans. They also witnessed, and took photographs of, numerous acts of Chinese barbarity.

Although the Chinese authorities hurriedly expelled not only

those journalists present in Tibet but also all foreigners, their atrocities received worldwide coverage. As a result, several western Governments called on the Chinese to respect human rights in Tibet and to release all political prisoners there. The Government in Peking replied by saying that the disturbances were an internal matter for themselves and rejected any criticism of their actions.

Because Tibet was now closed to the outside world, I heard little more information for several months. But I now know that, in the immediate aftermath of the demonstrations, the Chinese began a massive programme of political 're-education'. They even tried to organise a counter-demonstration in late October, offering potential participants the equivalent of a week's wages. But it had to be called off: no one came forward. Also, in order to try to prevent any more news leaking out, the PLA did its best to seal Tibet's borders, while the Government in Peking actually succeeded in pressuring a sovereign state, namely the Kingdom of Nepal, into arresting and handing over twenty-six Tibetans who managed to slip through the net. But it was during this period that I was informed by a Chinese source (motivated, like the tourists, by compassion and outrage) that an order to open fire on the demonstrators had most certainly been given.

At the beginning of 1988, the Chinese authorities in Lhasa instructed the monastic community to hold the *Monlam* prayer festival as usual. (It had been revived after twenty years in 1986.) However, the monks felt this would be inappropriate while so many people remained in prison and they resisted the edict. The Central People's Government in Peking then ordered that the celebrations must go ahead as planned, hoping to show the outside world that the situation in Tibet was normal. So the monks were forced to proceed. But evidently the Chinese feared more disturbances. On 28 February, the BBC reported that

'Thousands of Chinese security forces have been moved into the Lhasa area – road blocks are in force all over the city. Long convoys of armoured vehicles patrol the streets at night, and people are advised through loud-speaker announcements

to stay at home. One message said bluntly, "If you misbehave, we will kill you."

Then, a week before *Monlam*, a Reuters dispatch from Peking stated that fifty military vehicles and more than a thousand Chinese police, many in riot gear, rehearsed their manoeuvres in front of the Jokhang.

The festival began with tensions running high. A large military presence accompanied the opening ceremonies and there were at least ten security personnel to every monk present. In addition, many plain-clothes police mingled with the crowd, some again armed with video cameras. It also appears that members of the security forces disguised themselves, some by shaving their heads, others by wearing wigs, to give the impression either that they were monks or that they were from outside Lhasa.

At first, peace prevailed; but, on 5 March, some monks began shouting for the release of a *tulku* named Yulu Dawa Tsering, one of the many protestors to have been imprisoned without charge since the previous October. Next, the crowd that had assembled for the last part of the prayer festival, when a statue of Maitreya is taken round the *Barkhor*, began to denounce the Chinese presence in Tibet and to throw stones at the police who paraded provocatively nearby. To this, the security forces responded first by repeatedly charging into the crowd with clubs and electric cattle prods. Then the military opened fire, not indiscriminately this time. With precision they singled out and shot several protestors. There followed running battles which caused hundreds of Tibetan casualties. At around noon, police stormed the Jokhang and murdered at least twelve monks. One they beat severely, before tearing both his eyes out and hurling him from the roof. Tibet's holiest shrine became like a butcher's shop.

The whole Tibetan quarter of Lhasa was now in uproar and, during the night, about twenty Chinese shops, whose owners had repeatedly expressed a negative attitude towards Tibetans, were burned down. At the same time, the security forces made frequent assaults, dragging away hundreds of men, women and children.

Because there was only a handful of westerners in the city at the time, none of them journalists, little news escaped the media blackout and it was several weeks before I heard any details. In the meantime, it quickly became apparent that this latest disturbance exceeded in both scale and severity those of the previous autumn. As a result, a two-week curfew was imposed, during which at least 2,500 arrests were made and the entire Tibetan population of Lhasa was ruthlessly intimidated.

Once again, I was not greatly surprised by this expression of the Tibetan people's desperation, but I was nevertheless profoundly shocked to hear of China's violent response. World opinion was equally outraged and for the second time in six months there was wide coverage of the disturbances in the international press, despite the small amount of information available. Meanwhile, China's official reaction was the same as before: this was an internal matter for the Peking Government and they denounced the demonstrations as the work of a handful of 'reactionary splittists' and called me a dangerous criminal. The Dalai Lama, they suggested, had deliberately incited riots and sent in agents to Tibet to carry them out. This was predictable, though I was disturbed that the Chinese were now openly accusing foreigners of having played a leading part in both disturbances.

I received the first full report of the *Monlam* demonstration from the British politician, Lord Ennals, who arrived in Lhasa less than a month later. As leader of an independent delegation sanctioned by the Peking Government, Lord Ennals's aim was to investigate the human rights situation in Tibet. Along with the other members of his team, he was shocked to find that gross violations continued to be committed against the Tibetan people. The delegates also came across irrefutable evidence of torture and physical abuse of prisoners following the demonstrations, about which they heard complete details from numerous eyewitnesses. Their report, published by International Alert, spoke of a 'crisis which demands a rapid and positive response'.

At the time that this fact-finding mission was in Tibet, I myself was in Britain, where I had gone at the invitation of a number

of groups interested in Tibetan Buddhism. Whilst there, I was impressed to find intense and sympathetic media interest in the plight of the Tibetan people. Also, I was pleased to receive an invitation to speak to a group of concerned politicians at the European Parliament later in 1988. This coincided with several western leaders calling on China to open negotiations with myself on the future of Tibet.

Thinking that this invitation offered an opportunity to restate the Five-Point Peace Plan and, in particular, to expand on its fifth component, I gladly accepted. In my speech, which I delivered in Strasbourg in June 1988, I mentioned my opinion that, under certain special circumstances, it could be possible for the whole of Tibet to exist in association with the People's Republic of China, with foreign affairs and limited defence directed from Peking until a regional peace conference takes place, after which the whole of Tibet would be designated a zone of peace. I also made plain that the Tibetan Government in Exile was ready to negotiate with the Chinese authorities whenever they were ready. But I insisted that this was only a proposal and any decisions would have to be made by the Tibetan people, not by me.

Again, the response from Peking was negative. My speech was denounced and the European Parliament was severely criticised for having permitted me to speak. However, during the autumn of 1988, in a very promising development, the Chinese indicated that they wished to discuss the future of Tibet with the Dalai Lama. For the first time, they professed themselves willing not merely to discuss the Dalai Lama's status, but the matter of Tibet itself. It was left to me to choose a venue. Immediately, I nominated a team of negotiators and proposed that the two sides meet in Geneva during January 1989. My reason for this choice was to enable me to participate personally in the talks as soon as it became apparent that my presence was required.

Unfortunately, no sooner had they agreed in principle to talks, than the Chinese began to put up conditions and objections. At first, they expressed a preference for Peking as the venue; then they made a condition that no foreigner could be a member of

the negotiating team; next they said that they could not accept anyone who was a member of the Tibetan Government in Exile, because they did not recognise it; then they said they could not talk to anyone who had ever called for Tibetan independence. Finally, they said they would only talk to me. This was very disappointing. Having professed a clear willingness to talk, the Chinese had then made it virtually impossible for the talks ever to begin. And whilst I am by no means averse to meeting the Chinese personally, it is only sensible that there are preliminary discussions with my representatives first. So, although Geneva was finally agreed to as a venue, January 1989 came and went with nothing accomplished.

On 28 January 1989, news came that the Panchen Lama had died whilst on a rare visit to Tibet from Peking, where he lived. He was only fifty-three, and naturally I was deeply saddened. I felt that Tibet had lost a true freedom fighter. It cannot be denied that some Tibetans see him as a controversial character. Indeed, during the early 1950s, when he was still very young, I have a suspicion that, by siding with the Chinese, he thought he could use the situation to his own advantage. But his patriotism was real, I believe. And even though the Chinese used him as a puppet after releasing him from jail in 1978, he continued to oppose them until the end. Just before he died, he made a speech, reported by *Xinhua*, that was highly critical of the 'many mistakes' made in Tibet by the Chinese authorities. It was a courageous last act.

Two days later, he made his final appearance at Tashilhunpo monastery, where, shortly after consecrating the tombs of his predecessors, he apparently suffered a fatal heart attack. Many felt that the Panchen Lama's death in his own monastery was symbolic, the deliberate gesture of a true spiritual master.

Although I was not able to see him before he died, I did speak with the Panchen Lama on the telephone three times. Twice I spoke to him at his office in Peking, where he had been appointed to the National Assembly, and once whilst he was abroad. Inevitably, his conversations in Peking were monitored. I know this because, some weeks after the second of them, a carefully edited

transcript of our conversation was published in the Chinese press. However, while he was in Australia, he managed to give his escort the slip at a prearranged time and I spoke to him from West Germany. We were not able to speak for long, but it was enough to assure me that in his heart the Panchen Lama remained true to his religion, to his people and to his country. So I was not too concerned when I heard bad reports of him from Lhasa, where he was criticised for having extensive business interests. It was also said that he had taken a wife.

Following his death, I received an invitation from the Buddhist Society of China to attend his funeral in Peking. This amounted to an official invitation to visit China. Personally, I wanted to go but hesitated, as inevitably there would be some discussion about Tibet if I went. Had the Geneva talks taken place as planned, this might have been opportune. However, under the circumstances, I felt it would be inappropriate to go and regretfully refused.

Meanwhile, China's procrastination produced its inevitable result. On 5 March 1989, there began three more days of demonstrations in Lhasa. In some of the most vigorous expressions of discontent since March 1959, many tens of thousands took to the streets. Changing their tactics, the Chinese security forces remained on the sidelines throughout the first day, merely filming scenes which they showed on television that night. Then, on the following days, they reacted with repeated baton charges and indiscriminate shooting. Witnesses reported seeing them firing automatic weapons into Tibetan homes killing whole families.

Unfortunately, Tibetans reacted to this not only by attacking the police and security forces, but also, in a few instances, innocent Chinese civilians. This made me very sad. It makes no sense whatever for Tibetans to resort to violence. If they wanted to, with a thousand million people against our six million, China could forcefully erase the entire Tibetan race from the face of the earth. It would be much more constructive if people tried to understand their supposed enemies. Learning to forgive is much more useful than merely picking up a stone and throwing it at the object of one's anger, the more so when the provocation is extreme.

For it is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for oneself and others.

Yet, in truth, I realise that for most people such words are unrealistic. It is too much to ask. It is not right for me to expect Tibetans, who live their daily lives under such terrible hardship, to be able to love the Chinese. So whilst I will never condone it, I accept that some violence is inevitable.

Actually, I greatly admire and respect the courage of my people. Many of those who joined in the demonstrations were women, children and old people: hundreds of men were arrested on the first evening, so it was mostly their families who continued to express their feelings so vividly on the second and third days. Many of them are now probably dead. Even more are still in prison, being tortured and beaten on a daily basis.

Thanks to the presence of a few brave foreigners, some of whom experienced personal harassment, reports of this latest outrage were quickly transmitted to the outside world. As before, there was overwhelming support for the Tibetan people: the United States, France and the European Parliament condemned China's reprisals, which caused the deaths of at least two hundred and fifty unarmed Tibetans, not to mention the wounding of countless others. Many other Governments expressed their 'grave concern', and the subsequent imposition of martial law on 8 March drew widespread criticism.

The idea of China imposing martial law in Lhasa was terrifying, for, in reality, the city had been under military rule ever since 26 October 1951, when the first PLA troops arrived. It looked as if the Chinese must be about to turn the place into a slaughter-house, a Himalayan killing fields. Two days later, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising, I therefore sent an appeal to Deng Xiao-ping, asking that he intervene personally to lift martial law and end the repression of innocent Tibetans. He did not reply.

Within only a few weeks of the protests in Lhasa came the uprising in China. I followed events there with a mixture of disbelief and

horror, becoming especially anxious when some of the demonstrators began a hunger strike. The students were obviously so bright, so sincere, so innocent, with their whole lives to live. Against them, they had a Government that remained totally stubborn and cruel and indifferent. At the same time, I could not help feeling a certain admiration for the Chinese leadership, those decrepit, foolish old men who clung so fiercely and determinedly to their ideas. In spite of clear evidence that their system was breaking down and that Communism was failing throughout the world, and in spite of a million protestors outside their front door, they held to their faith.

Naturally, I was appalled when the military was finally deployed to break up the demonstration. But considered politically, I feel it denoted no more than a temporary setback for the democracy movement. By resorting to violence, the authorities can only have helped develop a favourable attitude towards the students amongst ordinary Chinese people. In so doing, they shortened by half to two-thirds the life of Communism in China. Also, they showed the world the truth about their methods: scepticism of Tibetans' claims about Chinese human rights abuse is no longer possible.

On a personal level, I feel somewhat sorry for Deng Xiao-ping. His name is now irreparably damaged, whereas without the massacre in 1989 he would have gone down in history as a great leader of his country. I also feel sympathy for his co-leaders who, in their ignorance, destroyed China's reputation abroad after a decade of assiduous image-building. It seems that, although they failed to propagandise the people, they succeeded only too well with themselves.

In cruel counterpoint to the many wonderful happenings elsewhere in the world, martial law prevailed in Lhasa throughout 1989. Never was I more conscious of this sad fact than when, on a visit to the US that autumn, I learned that I had won the Nobel Prize for Peace. Although the news did not matter much to me personally, I realised that it would mean a great deal to the people of Tibet, for it was they who were the real 'winners' of the prize.

My own satisfaction derived from what I saw as international recognition of the value of compassion, forgiveness and love. Moreover, I was pleased that at that moment the people of many countries were discovering for themselves that peaceful change was not impossible. In the past, the idea of non-violent revolution had seemed perhaps idealistic, and I drew great comfort from this overwhelming proof to the contrary.

Chairman Mao once said that political power comes from the barrel of a gun. He was only partly right: power that comes from the barrel of a gun can be effective only for a short time. In the end, people's love for truth, justice, freedom and democracy will triumph. No matter what governments do, the human spirit will always prevail.

I had direct experience of this truth right at the end of 1989, when I visited Berlin on the very day that Egon Kranz was toppled. Thanks to the co-operation of the East German authorities, I was able to go up to the Wall itself. As I stood there, in full view of a still-manned security post, an old lady silently handed me a red candle. With some emotion, I lit it and held it up. For a moment the tiny dancing flame threatened to go out, but it held and, while a crowd pressed round me, touching my hands, I prayed that the light of compassion and awareness would fill the world and dispel the darkness of fear and oppression. It was a moment I shall always remember.

Something similar happened when I went to Czechoslovakia a few weeks later as the guest of President Havel, who, fresh from a jail sentence for his political activities, was now President of his country. On arrival, I was greeted by an emotional crowd. Many people had tears in their eyes as they waved and gave the victory sign. And I saw at once that, despite the years of totalitarianism, these men and women were full of life and exultant in their newly won freedom.

I felt greatly honoured to be invited to Czechoslovakia, not only by a head of state – for the first time – but also by a man who has consistently shown such devotion to truth. I found the new President to be very gentle and full of honesty, humility – and

humour. At dinner that evening, as he sat drinking a glass of beer and holding a cigarette, he told me he identified strongly with the Sixth Dalai Lama, who had a reputation for worldliness. This prompted me to look forward to a second revolution in Czechoslovakia: that of less smoking at mealtimes! But what really impressed me about President Havel was his lack of pretence. He seemed quite unaffected by his new position, and his looks and talk suggested great sensitivity.

Another person I met in early 1990, who made a vivid impression on me, was Baba Amte, a man who founded a village in southern India. On what was previously barren earth he has brought into existence a thriving community surrounded by trees, a rose garden and a vegetable garden, and provided with a small hospital, an old people's home, schools and workshops. This alone is a great achievement, but what makes the place remarkable is that it was built entirely by handicapped people.

As I walked round it, I saw nothing to suggest any concessions to disability. At one point I went into a shed where a worker was repairing a bicycle wheel. In what remained of his leprous hands, he held a chisel and a hammer, which he was wielding with such vigour that I couldn't help feeling he was showing off. But his exuberant self-confidence made it clear to me that, given enthusiasm and proper organisation, even those people with crucial disadvantages can gain dignity and come to be recognised as productive members of society.

Baba Amte is an extraordinary person. After a long, vigorous life, during which he has suffered great physical hardship, he is himself virtually a cripple and, because of damage to his spine, he can now only stand straight or lie down. Yet he remains so full of energy that I could not do his work, even though I am much fitter. As I sat on his bed holding his hand, and he lay talking to me, I could not help feeling that here was someone who was truly compassionate. I told him that whereas my compassion is just so much talk, his shone through everything he did. In turn, Baba Amte told me the story of how he had made the decision to dedicate his life to helping others. One day, he had seen a leper

with worms in the place where his eyes had been. That was all it took.

Such examples of humanity as this give me the conviction that one day there will be an end to my people's suffering at the hands of the People's Republic of China, for there are many hundreds of millions of Chinese, and whilst maybe several thousand are participating in acts of cruelty at any one moment, I believe there must be several million performing acts of kindness.

That said, I cannot forget the present situation in Tibet, where neither discontent nor repression are confined to Lhasa. Between the end of September 1987 and May 1990, more than eighty separate demonstrations have been reported. Many have involved no more than a handful of protestors, and not all have ended in bloodshed. But as a result, my fellow countrymen and women are enduring a new reign of terror. In the capital itself, where Chinese now far outnumber Tibetans, tanks have recently been sighted while recent reports by organisations such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch make clear that brutal repression continues throughout Tibet. Arrests without justification, beatings and torture, prison sentences and even execution without trial, characterise the behaviour of the Chinese authorities.

To this unhappy list must be added the testimonies of several Tibetans who, having been imprisoned and pitifully ill-treated following one or more of the demonstrations, have since succeeded in escaping to India. One, who must remain nameless for fear of reprisals against his family, described to human rights investigators how he was kept naked and handcuffed in his cell for prolonged periods, during which he was abused physically and verbally. On occasions, drunken guards came into his cell and beat him. One night his head was repeatedly struck against the wall until his nose bled, although he remained conscious. He also described being 'used as a target for martial arts' practice by guards 'smelling of alcohol'. In between periods of interrogation trying to force him to confess that he had taken part in the protests, he was sometimes left alone for days without food or bedding in a bitterly cold cell.

On the fifth day of detention this person was woken after dawn

and taken to an interrogation centre outside the prison compound. He was first pinned to the ground by two guards, while a third, having knelt on his head, then took it in both hands and repeatedly banged his left temple against the ground for some ten minutes. He then described how he was subjected to the so-called 'hanging airplane' method of torture:

'I was picked up from the ground and two soldiers began to bind a rope around my arms. This long rope had a metal ring in the middle which was positioned behind my neck. Both ends were then passed in front of my shoulders and wound in a spiral tightly around my arms, finally trapping my fingers. One soldier then drew the two rope ends back through the metal ring, forcing my arms up between the shoulder blades. Holding on to the rope he kneed me hard in the small of the back, which caused a sharp pain in the chest. The rope was then passed over a hook in the ceiling and pulled downwards so that I was suspended with my toes just touching the ground. I quickly lost consciousness. I don't know how long I blacked out for, but I woke up back in my cell, naked except for handcuffs, and shackled around my ankles.'

Four days later he was again led naked from his cell, handcuffed but without leg shackles, outside the prison compound. He was not brought to the interrogation room, but was bound to a tree.

'One soldier took a thick piece of rope and tied me to a tree. The rope was wound around my body from the neck down to the knees. The soldier then stood behind the tree and put his foot against it, pulling the rope tight. Chinese soldiers were sitting around the tree having lunch. One stood up and threw the remains of his bowl of vegetables and chillies in my face. The chillies burned my eyes and I still suffer a little. I was then untied and taken back to my cell, but I stumbled often as I still found it difficult to walk and I was beaten every time I fell.'

Other ex-detainees have related how they were repeatedly given shocks from the electric cattle prods that police used while the demonstrations were actually taking place. A young man had one forced into his mouth, causing severe swelling, and a nun told investigators of how she had had this instrument of torture forced into both her anus and vagina.

While it is tempting to take this sort of information as definitive of the Chinese people as a whole, I know it would be wrong to do so. But equally, such depravity cannot be dismissed. So, although I have now spent the greater part of my life in exile and although I have naturally taken a keen interest in China's affairs throughout that time, as a result of which I have some experience as a 'China watcher', still I must admit that I do not fully understand the Chinese mind.

When I visited China in the early 1950s, I could see that a lot of people had given up everything in order to help bring about a transformation in society. Many bore physical scars from the struggle and most were men of the highest principle who genuinely sought to bring about real benefits for every person in their vast country. To do this, they constructed a party system which enabled them to know every last detail about one another, right down to the number of hours' sleep each one needed. They were so passionate about their ideals that they would stop at nothing to achieve them. And in their leader, Mao Tse-tung, they had a man of great vision and imagination, someone who realised the value of constructive criticism and frequently encouraged it.

Yet in no time at all, the new administration became paralysed by petty in-fighting and squabbling. I saw it happen in front of my own eyes. Soon, they began to exchange fact for fable, to tell falsehoods whenever it was necessary to show themselves in a good light. When I met Chou En-lai in India on that occasion in 1956 and told him of my fears, he replied by telling me not to worry. All would be well. In reality, things only changed for the worse.

When I returned to Tibet in 1957, I found the Chinese authorities openly persecuting my people, though simultaneously I was constantly assured there would be no interference. They lied

without hesitation, just as they have ever since. Worse, it seemed that the vast majority of the outside world was prepared to believe this fiction. Then, during the 1970s, a number of prominent western politicians were taken to Tibet and came back saying that all was well there.

The truth remains that, since the Chinese invasion, over a million Tibetans have died as a direct result of Peking's policies. When adopting its resolution on Tibet in 1965, the United Nations stated plainly that China's occupation of my homeland has been characterised by 'acts of murder, rape and arbitrary imprisonment; torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Tibetans on a large scale'.

I remain at a loss to explain how this happened, how the noble ideals of so many good men and women became transformed into senseless barbarity. Nor can I understand what motivated those people within the Chinese leadership who actively counselled the total destruction of the Tibetan race. It seems that China is a country which has lost its faith, as a result of which the Chinese people have themselves endured unspeakable misery over the past forty-one years – all in the name of Communism.

Yet the pursuit of Communism has been one of the greatest human experiments of all time, and I do not deny that I myself was very impressed with its ideology at first. The trouble was, as I soon discovered, that although Communism claims to serve 'the people' – for whom there are 'people's hotels', 'people's hospitals', and so on – 'the people' does not mean everyone, only those who hold views that are held by a minority to be 'the people's views'.

Some of the responsibility for the excesses of Communism rests squarely on the West. The hostility with which it greeted the first Marxist governments accounts in part for the often ludicrous precautions they took to protect themselves. They became suspicious of everything and everyone, and suspicion causes terrible unhappiness because it goes against a fundamental human trait – namely one person's desire to trust another person. In this connection, I remember, for example, the absurd situation of my visit to Lenin's room in the Kremlin during my visit to Moscow

in 1982. I was watched over by an unsmiling plain-clothes security man who was clearly ready to shoot in an instant, whilst a woman guide mechanically explained the official history of the Russian Revolution.

However, in as much as I have any political allegiance, I suppose I am still half Marxist. I have no argument with Capitalism, so long as it is practised in a humanitarian fashion, but my religious beliefs dispose me far more towards Socialism and Internationalism, which are more in line with Buddhist principles. The other attractive thing about Marxism for me is its assertion that man is ultimately responsible for his own destiny. This reflects Buddhist thought exactly.

Against this, I set the fact that those countries which pursue Capitalist policies within a democratic framework are much freer than those which pursue the Communist ideal. So ultimately I am in favour of humanitarian government, one which aims to serve the whole community: the young, the old and the disabled, as much as those who can be directly productive members of society.

Having said that I remain half Marxist, if I were actually to vote in an election it would be for one of the Environmental parties. One of the most positive developments in the world recently has been the growing awareness of the importance of Nature. There is nothing sacred or holy about this. Taking care of our planet is like taking care of our houses. Since we human beings come from Nature, there is no point in our going against Nature, which is why I say the environment is not a matter of religion or ethics or morality. These are luxuries, since we can survive without them. But we will not survive if we continue to go against Nature.

We have to accept this. If we unbalance Nature, humankind will suffer. Furthermore, as people alive today, we must consider future generations: a clean environment is a human right like any other. It is therefore part of our responsibility towards others to ensure that the world we pass on is as healthy, if not healthier, than when we found it. This is not quite such a difficult proposition as it might sound. For although there is a limit to what we as individuals can do, there is no limit to what a universal response

might achieve. It is up to us as individuals to do what we can, however little that may be. Just because switching off the light on leaving the room seems inconsequential, it does not mean that we should not do it.

This is where, as a Buddhist monk, I feel that belief in the concept of *karma* is very useful in the conduct of daily life. Once you believe in the connection between motivation and its effect, you will become more alert to the effects which your own actions have upon yourself and others.

Thus, despite the continuing tragedy of Tibet, I find much good in the world. I am especially encouraged that the belief in consumerism as an end in itself seems to be giving way to an appreciation that we humans must conserve the earth's resources. This is very necessary. Human beings are in a sense children of the earth. And, whereas up until now our common Mother tolerated her children's behaviour, she is presently showing us that she has reached the limit of her tolerance.

It is my prayer that one day I shall be able to carry this message of concern for the environment and for others to the people of China. Since Buddhism is by no means alien to the Chinese, I believe that I may be able to serve them in a practical way. The last Panchen Lama's predecessor once conducted a *Kalachakra* initiation ceremony in Peking. If I were to do the same, it would not be without precedent. For as a Buddhist monk, my concern extends to all members of the human family and, indeed, to all suffering sentient beings.

I believe that this suffering is caused by ignorance, and that people inflict pain on others in pursuit of their own happiness or satisfaction. Yet true happiness comes from a sense of inner peace and contentment, which in turn must be achieved through cultivation of altruism, of love, of compassion, and through the elimination of anger, selfishness and greed.

To some people this may sound naïve, but I would remind them that, no matter what part of the world we come from, fundamentally we are all the same human beings. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. We have the same basic needs

- and concerns. Furthermore, all of us human beings want freedom and the right to determine our own destiny as individuals. That is human nature. The great changes taking place everywhere in the world, from Eastern Europe to Africa, are a clear indication of this.

At the same time, the problems we face today – violent conflicts, destruction of Nature, poverty, hunger, and so on – are mainly problems created by humans. They can be resolved – but only through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. To do this, we need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and for the planet we share, based on a good heart and awareness.

Now, although I have found my own Buddhist religion helpful in generating love and compassion, I am convinced that these qualities can be developed by anyone, with or without religion. I further believe that all religions pursue the same goals: those of cultivating goodness and bringing happiness to all human beings. Though the means might appear different, the ends are the same.

With the ever-growing impact of science on our lives, religion and spirituality have a greater role to play in reminding us of our humanity. There is no contradiction between the two. Each gives us valuable insights into the other. Both science and the teachings of the Buddha tell us of the fundamental unity of all things.

I wish to conclude this book with a personal note of thanks to all friends of Tibet. The concern and support which you have expressed for the plight of the Tibetans has touched us all greatly, and continues to give us courage to struggle for freedom and justice, not through the use of arms, but with the powerful weapons of truth and determination. I know that I speak on behalf of all Tibetans when I thank you and ask you not to forget Tibet at this critical time in our country's history.

We, too, hope to contribute to the development of a more peaceful, more humane and more beautiful world. A future free Tibet will seek to help all those in need, to protect Nature and to promote peace. I believe that our Tibetan ability to combine

spiritual qualities with a realistic and practical attitude will enable us to make a special contribution, in however modest a way.

Finally, I would like to share with my readers a short prayer which gives me great inspiration and determination:

For as long as space endures,
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then may I, too, abide
To dispel the misery of the world.

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